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TENNYSON

*Poems and Plays*



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TENNYSON

*Poems and Plays*

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ALFRED TENNYSON

Born, Somersby, Lincolnshire, 6 August 1809  
Died, Aldworth, Haslemere, Surrey, 6 October 1892

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O. S. A.

# CONTENTS

TO THE QUEEN	I
JUVENILIA	
<i>Claribel</i>	2
<i>Nothing will Die</i>	2
<i>All Things will Die</i>	2
<i>Leonine Elegiacs</i>	3
<i>Supposed Confessions of a Second-rate Sensitive Mind</i>	3
<i>The Kraken</i>	5
<i>Song</i>	5
<i>Lilian</i>	6
<i>Isabel</i>	6
<i>Mariana</i>	7
<i>To —</i>	7
<i>Madeline</i>	8
<i>Song—The Owl</i>	8
<i>Second Song—To the Same</i>	9
<i>Recollections of the Arabian Nights</i>	9
<i>Ode to Memory—Addressed to —</i>	10
<i>Song</i>	12
<i>A Character</i>	12
<i>The Poet</i>	13
<i>The Poet's Mind</i>	13
<i>The Sea-Fairies</i>	14
<i>The Deserted House</i>	15
<i>The Dying Swan</i>	15
<i>A Dirge</i>	15
<i>Love and Death</i>	16
<i>The Ballad of Oriana</i>	16
<i>Circumstance</i>	17
<i>The Merman</i>	18

## CONTENTS

<i>The Mermaid</i>	18
<i>Adeline</i>	19
<i>Margaret</i>	20
<i>Rosalind</i>	20
<i>Eleänore</i>	21
<i>Kate</i>	23
<i>'My life is full of weary days'</i>	23
<i>Early Sonnets</i>	
1. <i>Sonnet to —</i>	23
2. <i>Sonnet to J. M. K.</i>	24
3. <i>'Mine be the strength of spirit'</i>	24
4. <i>Alexander</i>	24
5. <i>Buonaparte</i>	24
6. <i>Poland</i>	24
7. <i>'Caress'd or chidden'</i>	25
8. <i>'The form, the form alone is eloquent'</i>	25
9. <i>'Wan Sculptor, weepst thou'</i>	25
10. <i>'If I were loved, as I desire to be'</i>	25
11. <i>The Bridesmaid</i>	26

### THE LADY OF SHALOTT, AND OTHER POEMS

<i>The Lady of Shalott</i>	26
<i>Mariana in the South</i>	28
<i>The Two Voices</i>	29
<i>The Miller's Daughter</i>	34
<i>Fatima</i>	37
<i>CEnone</i>	38
<i>The Sisters</i>	41
<i>To —</i>	42
<i>The Palace of Art</i>	42
<i>Lady Clara Vere de Vere</i>	46
<i>The May Queen</i>	47
<i>New-Year's Eve</i>	48
<i>Conclusion</i>	49

## CONTENTS

<i>The Lotos-Eaters</i>	51
<i>Choric Song</i>	51
<i>A Dream of Fair Women</i>	53
<i>The Blackbird</i>	58
<i>The Death of the Old Year</i>	58
<i>To J. S.</i>	59
<i>On a Mourner</i>	60
'You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease'	60
'Of old sat Freedom on the heights'	61
'Love thou thy land'	61
<i>England and America in 1782</i>	62
<i>The Goose</i>	62

## ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS

<i>The Epic</i>	63
<i>Morte d' Arthur</i>	64
<i>The Gardener's Daughter; or, the Pictures</i>	68
<i>Dora</i>	72
<i>Audley Court</i>	75
<i>Walking to the Mail</i>	76
<i>Edwin Morris; or, the Lake</i>	78
<i>St. Simeon Stylites</i>	80
<i>The Talking Oak</i>	83
<i>Love and Duty</i>	86
<i>The Golden Year</i>	88
<i>Ulysses</i>	89
<i>Tithonus</i>	90
<i>Locksley Hall</i>	91
<i>Godiva</i>	96
<i>The Day-Dream</i>	97
<i>Prologue</i>	97
<i>The Sleeping Palace</i>	98



## CONTENTS

<i>The Sleeping Beauty</i>	98
<i>The Arrival</i>	99
<i>The Revival</i>	99
<i>The Departure</i>	99
<i>Moral</i>	100
<i>L'Envoi</i>	100
<i>Epilogue</i>	101
<i>Amphion</i>	101
<i>St. Agnes' Eve</i>	102
<i>Sir Galahad</i>	102
<i>Edward Gray</i>	103
<i>Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue</i>	104
<i>Lady Clare</i>	106
<i>The Captain</i>	107
<i>The Lord of Burleigh</i>	108
<i>The Voyage</i>	109
<i>Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere</i>	110
<i>A Farewell</i>	111
<i>The Beggar Maid</i>	111
<i>The Eagle</i>	111
<i>'Move eastward, happy earth, and leave'</i>	111
<i>'Come not, when I am dead'</i>	112
<i>The Letters</i>	112
<i>The Vision of Sin</i>	112
<i>To —, after reading a Life and Letters</i>	115
<i>To E. L., on his Travels in Greece</i>	116
<i>'Break, break, break'</i>	116
<i>The Poet's Song</i>	116
<b>ENOCH ARDEN, AND OTHER POEMS</b>	
<i>Enoch Arden</i>	117
<i>The Brook</i>	130
<i>Aylmer's Field 1793</i>	133

## CONTENTS

<i>Sea Dreams</i>	145
<i>Lucretius</i>	150
THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY	154
<i>Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington</i>	202
<i>The Third of February 1852</i>	205
<i>The Charge of the Light Brigade</i>	206
<i>Ode sung at the Opening of the International Exhibition</i>	207
<i>A Welcome to Alexandra</i>	208
<i>A Welcome to Her Royal Highness Marie Alexandrovna, Duchess of Edinburgh</i>	208
<i>The Grandmother</i>	209
<i>Northern Farmer. Old Style</i>	212
<i>Northern Farmer. New Style</i>	214
<i>The Daisy</i>	216
<i>To the Rev. F. D. Maurice</i>	218
<i>Will</i>	218
<i>In the Valley of Caunteretz</i>	218
<i>In the Garden at Swainston</i>	219
<i>The Flower</i>	219
<i>Requiescat</i>	219
<i>The Sailor Boy</i>	219
<i>The Islet</i>	220
<i>Child-Songs</i>	
1. <i>The City Child</i>	220
2. <i>Minnie and Winnie</i>	220
<i>The Spiteful Letter</i>	221
<i>Literary Squabbles</i>	221
<i>The Victim</i>	221
<i>Wages</i>	222
<i>The Higher Pantheism</i>	222
<i>The Voice and the Peak</i>	223
<i>'Flower in the crannied wall'</i>	224
<i>A Dedication</i>	224

## CONTENTS

### EXPERIMENTS

<i>Boëdicea</i>	224
<i>In Quantity. On Translations of Homer</i>	226
<i>Milton</i>	226
<i>Specimen of a Translation of the Iliad in Blank Verse</i>	226

### THE WINDOW; OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS

<i>The Window</i>	227
<i>On the Hill</i>	227
<i>At the Window</i>	227
<i>Gone</i>	228
<i>Winter</i>	228
<i>Spring</i>	228
<i>The Letter</i>	228
<i>No Answer</i>	228
<i>No Answer</i>	229
<i>The Answer</i>	229
<i>Ay</i>	229
<i>When</i>	229
<i>Marriage Morning</i>	229

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.	230
----------------------	-----

MAUD: A MONODRAMA	266
-------------------	-----

### IDYLLS OF THE KING

<i>Dedication</i>	287
<i>The Coming of Arthur</i>	287
<i>The Round Table</i>	295
<i>Gareth and Lynette</i>	295
<i>The Marriage of Geraint</i>	318
<i>Geraint and Enid</i>	330
<i>Balin and Balan</i>	344
<i>Merlin and Vivien</i>	353

## CONTENTS

<i>Lancelot and Elaine</i>	368
<i>The Holy Grail</i>	389
<i>Pelleas and Ettarre</i>	402
<i>The Last Tournament</i>	412
<i>Guinevere</i>	423
<i>The Passing of Arthur</i>	434
<i>To the Queen</i>	441
 THE LOVER'S TALE	 442
<i>To Alfred Tennyson, My Grandson</i>	463
<i>The First Quarrel</i>	463
<i>Rizpah</i>	465
<i>The Northern Cobbler</i>	467
<i>The Revenge: A Ballad of the Fleet</i>	470
<i>The Sisters</i>	473
<i>The Village Wife; or, the Entail</i>	477
<i>In the Children's Hospital</i>	480
<i>Dedicatory Poem to the Princess Alice</i>	481
<i>The Defence of Lucknow</i>	482
<i>Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham</i>	484
<i>Columbus</i>	487
<i>The Voyage of Maeldune</i>	491
<i>De Profundis:</i>	
<i>    The Two Greetings</i>	494
<i>    The Human Cry</i>	495
<i>Prefatory Sonnet to the 'Nineteenth Century'</i>	495
<i>To the Rev. W. H. Brookfield</i>	495
<i>Montenegro</i>	495
<i>To Victor Hugo</i>	496
 TRANSLATIONS, ETC.	
<i>Battle of Brunanburh</i>	496
<i>Achilles over the Trench</i>	498
<i>To Princess Frederica on her Marriage</i>	498

## CONTENTS

<i>Sir John Franklin</i>	498
<i>To Dante</i>	498
 TIRESIAS, AND OTHER POEMS	
<i>To E. Fitzgerald</i>	499
<i>Tiresias</i>	499
<i>The Wreck</i>	502
<i>Despair</i>	505
<i>The Ancient Sage</i>	508
<i>The Flight</i>	512
<i>Tomorrow</i>	515
<i>The Spinster's Sweet-Arts</i>	517
<i>Locksley Hall Sixty Years After</i>	520
<i>Prologue to General Hamley</i>	528
<i>The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava</i>	528
<i>Epilogue</i>	529
<i>To Virgil</i>	530
<i>The Dead Prophet</i>	531
<i>Early Spring</i>	532
<i>Prefatory Poem to my Brother's Sonnets</i>	533
<i>'Frater Ave atque Vale'</i>	533
<i>Helen's Tower</i>	533
<i>Epitaph on Lord Stratford de Redcliffe</i>	533
<i>Epitaph on General Gordon</i>	534
<i>Epitaph on Caxton</i>	534
<i>To the Duke of Argyll</i>	534
<i>Hands all Round</i>	534
<i>Freedom</i>	534
<i>To H.R.H. Princess Beatrice</i>	535
<i>The Fleet</i>	535
<i>Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition by the Queen</i>	536
<i>Poets and their Bibliographies</i>	537
<i>To W. G. Macready</i>	537

## CONTENTS

QUEEN MARY: A DRAMA	538
HAROLD: A DRAMA	607
BECKET	646
THE CUP: A TRAGEDY	699
THE FALCON	714
THE PROMISE OF MAY	724
THE FORESTERS: ROBIN HOOD AND MAID MARIAN	748
DEMETER, AND OTHER POEMS	
<i>To the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava</i>	783
<i>On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria</i>	783
<i>To Professor Jebb</i>	784
<i>Demeter and Persephone</i>	785
<i>Owd Roä</i>	787
<i>Vastness</i>	790
<i>The Ring</i>	791
<i>Forlorn</i>	798
<i>Happy</i>	799
<i>To Ulysses</i>	802
<i>To Mary Boyle</i>	803
<i>The Progress of Spring</i>	804
<i>Merlin and the Gleam</i>	806
<i>Romney's Remorse</i>	808
<i>Parnassus</i>	810
<i>By an Evolutionist</i>	811
<i>Far—far—away</i>	811
<i>Politics</i>	812
<i>Beautiful City</i>	812
<i>The Roses on the Terrace</i>	812

## CONTENTS

<i>The Play</i>	812
<i>On One who affected an Effeminate Manner</i>	812
<i>To One who ran down the English</i>	812
<i>The Snowdrop</i>	812
<i>The Throstle</i>	812
<i>The Oak</i>	813
<i>In Memoriam—William George Ward</i>	813

### THE DEATH OF CENONE, AND OTHER POEMS

<i>June Bracken and Heather</i>	814
<i>To the Master of Balliol</i>	814
<i>The Death of Cenone</i>	814
<i>St. Telemachus</i>	816
<i>Akbar's Dream</i>	817
<i>The Bandit's Death</i>	822
<i>The Church-warden and the Curate</i>	823
<i>Charity</i>	824
<i>Kapiolani</i>	826
<i>The Dawn</i>	827
<i>The Making of Man</i>	827
<i>The Dreamer</i>	827
<i>Mechanophilus</i>	828
<i>Riflemen form!</i>	828
<i>The Tourney</i>	829
<i>The Wanderer</i>	829
<i>Poets and Critics</i>	829
<i>A Voice spake out of the Skies</i>	829
<i>Doubt and Prayer</i>	829
<i>Faith</i>	830
<i>The Silent Voices</i>	830
<i>God and the Universe</i>	830
<i>The Death of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale</i>	830
<i>Crossing the Bar</i>	831

## CONTENTS

### APPENDIX OF POEMS NOT INCLUDED IN THE AUTHOR'S FINAL EDITION

<i>Timbuctoo</i>	832
<b>FROM 'POEMS, CHIEFLY LYRICAL' 1830</b>	
<i>The 'How' and the 'Why'</i>	835
<i>The Burial of Love</i>	836
<i>To —</i>	836
<i>Songs</i>	836
<i>Hero to Leander</i>	838
<i>The Mystic</i>	838
<i>The Grasshopper</i>	839
<i>Love, Pride, and Forgetfulness</i>	839
<i>Chorus</i>	839
<i>Lost Hope</i>	840
<i>The Tears of Heaven</i>	840
<i>Love and Sorrow</i>	840
<i>To a Lady Sleeping</i>	840
<i>Sonnets</i>	841
<i>Love</i>	841
<i>English Warsong</i>	842
<i>National Song</i>	843
<i>Dualisms</i>	843
<i>Oi péovres</i>	843
<i>No More</i>	844
<i>Anacreontics</i>	844
<i>A Fragment</i>	844
<i>Sonnets</i>	844
<b>FROM 'POEMS' 1833</b>	
<i>Sonnet</i>	845
<i>The Palace of Art</i>	845
<i>The Hesperides</i>	846
<i>Note to Rosalind</i>	847



## JUVENILIA

### CLARIBEL

#### A MELODY

##### I

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall:  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

##### II

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone:  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone:  
At midnight the moon cometh,  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throstle lispeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling runnel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

### NOTHING WILL DIE

WHEN will the stream be weary of flowing  
Under my eye?  
When will the wind be weary of blowing  
Over the sky?  
When will the clouds be weary of fleeting?  
When will the heart be weary of beating?  
And nature die?  
Never, oh! never, nothing will die;  
The stream flows,  
The wind blows,  
The cloud fleets,  
The heart beats,  
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die;  
All things will change  
Thro' eternity.  
'Tis the world's winter;

Autumn and summer  
Are gone long ago;  
Earth is dry to the centre,  
But spring, a new comer,  
A spring rich and strange,  
Shall make the winds blow  
Round and round,  
Thro' and thro',  
Here and there,  
Till the air  
And the ground  
Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made;  
It will change, but it will not fade.  
So let the wind range;  
For even and morn  
Ever will be  
Thro' eternity.  
Nothing was born;  
Nothing will die;  
All things will change.

### ALL THINGS WILL DIE

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its flowing  
Under my eye;  
Warmly and broadly the south winds are  
blowing  
Over the sky.  
One after another the white clouds are  
fleeting;  
Every heart this May morning in joyance  
is beating  
Full merrily;  
Yet all things must die.  
The stream will cease to flow;  
The wind will cease to blow;  
The clouds will cease to fleet;  
The heart will cease to beat;  
For all things must die.  
All things must die.  
Spring will come never more.  
Oh! vanity!  
Death waits at the door.  
See! our friends are all forsaking  
The wine and the merrymaking.

## ALL THINGS WILL DIE

We are call'd—we must go.

Laid low, very low,

In the dark we must lie.

The merry glees are still;

The voice of the bird

Shall no more be heard,

Nor the wind on the hill.

Oh! misery!

Hark, death is calling

While I speak to ye,

The jaw is falling,

The red cheek paling,

The strong limbs failing;

Ice with the warm blood mixing;

The eyeballs fixing.

Nine times goes the passing bell:

Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth

Had a birth,

As all men know,

Long ago.

And the old earth must die.

So let the warm winds range,

And the blue wave beat the shore;

For even and morn

Ye will never see

Thro' eternity.

All things were born.

Ye will come never more,

For all things must die.

### LEONINE ELEGIACS

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming the  
broad valley dimm'd in the gloaming:

Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines only the  
far river shines.

Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers  
of rose-blowing bushes,

Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble  
and fall.

Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly; the  
grasshopper carolleteth clearly;

Deeply the wood-dove coos; shrilly the  
owlet halloos;

Winds creep; dews fall chilly: in her first  
sleep earth breathes stilly:

Over the pools in the burn water-gnats  
murmur and mourn.

Sadly the far kine loweth: the glimmering  
water outfloweth:

Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope to  
the dark hyaline.

Low-throned Hesper is stayed between the  
two peaks; but the Naiad

Throbbing in mild unrest holds him be-  
neath in her breast.

The ancient poetess singeth, that Hesperus  
all things bringeth,

Smoothing the wearied mind: bring me  
my love, Rosalind.

Thou comest morning or even; she cometh  
not morning or even.

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my  
sweet Rosalind?

### SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

#### OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND

O GOD! my God! have mercy now.

I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou

Didst die for me, for such as *me*,

Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,

And that my sin was as a thorn

Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,

Wounding Thy soul.—That even now,

In this extremest misery

Of ignorance, I should require

A sign! and if a bolt of fire

Would rive the slumbrous summer noon

While I do pray to Thee alone,

Think my belief would stronger grow!

Is not my human pride brought low?

The boastings of my spirit still?

The joy I had in my freewill

All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown?

And what is left to me, but Thou,

And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;

Christians with happy countenances—

And children all seem full of Thee!

And women smile with saint-like glances

Like Thine own mother's when she bow'd

Above Thee, on that happy morn

When angels spake to men aloud,

And Thou and peace to earth were born.

Goodwill to me as well as all—

I one of them: my brothers they:

Brothers in Christ—a world of peace

And confidence, day after day;

And trust and hope till things should cease,

And then one Heaven receive us all.

## CONFESSIONS OF A SENSITIVE MIND

How sweet to have a common faith!  
To hold a common scorn of death!  
And at a burial to hear  
The creaking cords which wound and eat  
Into my human heart, when'er  
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,  
With hopeful grief, were passing sweet!

Thrice happy state again to be  
The trustful infant on the knee!  
Who lets his rosy fingers play  
About his mother's neck, and knows  
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.  
They comfort him by night and day;  
They light his little life away;  
He hath no thought of coming woes;  
He hath no care of life or death;  
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,  
Because the Spirit of happiness  
And perfect rest so inward is;  
And loveth so his innocent heart,  
Her temple and her place of birth,  
Where she would ever wish to dwell,  
Life of the fountain there, beneath  
Its salient springs, and far apart,  
Hating to wander out on earth,  
Or breathe into the hollow air,  
Whose chillness would make visible  
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,  
Which mixing with the infant's blood,  
Fulfils him with beatitude.  
Oh! sure it is a special care  
Of God, to fortify from doubt,  
To arm in proof, and guard about  
With triple-mailed trust, and clear  
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were  
As thine, my mother, when with brows  
Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld  
In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,  
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—  
For me unworthy!—and beheld  
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew  
The beauty and repose of faith,  
And the clear spirit shining thro'.  
Oh! wherefore do we grow awry  
From roots which strike so deep? why  
dare

Paths in the desert? Could not I  
Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,

To the earth—until the ice would melt  
Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?  
What Devil had the heart to scathe  
Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush the  
dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave  
Was deep, my mother, in the clay?  
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I  
So little love for thee? But why  
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why pray  
To one who heeds not, who can save  
But will not? Great in faith, and strong  
Against the grief of circumstance  
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if  
Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive  
Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,  
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance  
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low  
Unto the death, not sunk! I know  
At matins and at evensong,  
That thou, if thou wert yet alive,  
In deep and daily prayers would'st strive  
To reconcile me with thy God.  
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold  
At heart, thou wouldstst murmur still—  
'Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,  
My Lord, if so it be Thy will.'  
Would'st tell me I must brook the rod  
And chastisement of human pride;  
That pride, the sin of devils, stood  
Betwixt me and the light of God!  
That hitherto I had defied  
And had rejected God—that grace  
Would drop from his o'er-brimming love,  
As manna on my wilderness,  
If I would pray—that God would move  
And strike the hard, hard rock, and thence,  
Sweet in their utmost bitterness,  
Would issue tears of penitence  
Which would keep green hope's life. Alas!  
I think that pride hath now no place  
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,  
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet  
Anchor thy frailty there, where man  
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea  
At midnight, when the crisp slope waves  
After a tempest, rib and fret  
The broad-imbas'd beach, why he  
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?

## CONFESSIONS OF A SENSITIVE MIND

Wherefore his ridges are not curls  
And ripples of an inland mere?  
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can  
Draw down into his vexed pools  
All that blue heaven which hues and paves  
The other? I am too forlorn,  
Too shaken: my own weakness fools  
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,  
Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

'Yet,' said I, in my morn of youth,  
The unsunn'd freshness of my strength,  
When I went forth in quest of truth,  
'It is man's privilege to doubt,  
If so be that from doubt at length,  
Truth may stand forth unmoved of change,  
An image with profulgent brows,  
And perfect limbs, as from the storm  
Of running fires and fluid range  
Of lawless airs, at last stood out  
This excellence and solid form  
Of constant beauty. For the Ox  
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills  
The horned valleys all about,  
And hollows of the fringed hills  
In summer heats, with placid lows  
Unfearing, till his own blood flows  
About his hoof. And in the flocks  
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,  
And raceth freely with his fere,  
And answers to his mother's calls  
From the flower'd furrow. In a time,  
Of which he wots not, run short pains  
Thro' his warm heart; and then, from  
whence

He knows not, on his light there falls  
A shadow; and his native slope,  
Where he was wont to leap and climb,  
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,  
And something in the darkness draws  
His forehead earthward, and he dies.  
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope  
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,  
Living, but that he shall live on?  
Shall we not look into the laws  
Of life and death, and things that seem,  
And things that be, and analyse  
Our double nature, and compare  
All creeds till we have found the one,  
If one there be?' Ay me! I fear  
All may not doubt, but everywhere

Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,  
Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove  
Shadow me over, and my sins  
Be unremember'd, and Thy love  
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet  
Somewhat before the heavy clod  
Weighs on me, and the busy fret  
Of that sharp-headed worm begins  
In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!  
O spirit and heart made desolate!  
O damned vacillating state!

## THE KRAKEN

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep;  
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep  
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights  
flee  
About his shadowy sides: above him swell  
Huge sponges of millennial growth and  
height;  
And far away into the sickly light,  
From many a wondrous grot and secret  
cell  
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi  
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering  
green.  
There hath he lain for ages and will lie  
Battening upon huge seaworms in his  
sleep,  
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;  
Then once by man and angels to be seen,  
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface  
die.

## SONG

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,  
Leaning upon the ridged sea,  
Breathed low around the rolling earth  
With mellow preludes, 'We are free.'

The streams through many a lilyed row  
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,  
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow  
Between the blossoms, 'We are free.'

## LILIAN

### LILIAN

#### I

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
When I ask her if she love me,  
Claps her tiny hands above me,  
Laughing all she can;  
She'll not tell me if she love me,  
Cruel little Lilian.

#### II

When my passion seeks  
Pleasance in love-sighs,  
She, looking thro' and thro' me  
Thoroughly to undo me,  
Smiling, never speaks:  
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,  
From beneath her gathered wimple  
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
Till the lightning laughters dimple  
The baby-roses in her cheeks;  
Then away she flies.

#### III

Prythee weep, May Lilian!  
Gaiety without eclipse  
Wearieth me, May Lilian:  
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth  
When from crimson-threaded lips  
Silver-treble laughter trilleth:  
Prythee weep, May Lilian.

#### IV

Praying all I can,  
If prayers will not hush thee,  
Airy Lilian,  
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
Fairy Lilian.

### ISABEL

#### I

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright, but  
fed  
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,  
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by  
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent  
fane  
Of her still spirit; locks not wide-dispread,  
Madonna-wise on either side her  
head;

Sweet lips whereon perpetually did  
reign

The summer calm of golden charity,  
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
The stately flower of female fortitude,  
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowli-  
head.

#### II

The intuitive decision of a bright  
And thorough-edged intellect to part  
Error from crime; a prudence to with-  
hold;  
The laws of marriage character'd in  
gold  
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart;  
A love still burning upward, giving light  
To read those laws; an accent very low  
In blandishment, but a most silver flow  
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,  
Right to the heart and brain, tho' unde-  
sried,  
Winning its way with extreme gentle-  
ness  
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride;  
A courage to endure and to obey;  
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,  
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,  
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

#### III

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon;  
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,  
Till in its onward current it absorbs  
With swifter movement and in purer  
light  
The vexed eddies of its wayward  
brother:  
A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
Clothing the stem, which else had  
fallen quite  
With cluster'd flower-bells and ambro-  
sial orbs  
Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each  
other—  
Shadow forth thee:—the world hath  
not another  
(Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee,  
And thou of God in thy great charity)  
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

## MARIANA

### MARIANA

'Mariana in the moated grange.'

*Measure for Measure*

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots  
Were thickly crusted, one and all:  
The rusted nails fell from the knots  
That held the pear to the gable-wall.  
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:  
Unlifted was the clinking latch;  
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
Upon the lonely moated grange.  
She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, 'I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead!'

Her tears fell with the dews at even;  
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;  
She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
Either at morn or eventide.  
After the flitting of the bats,  
When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
She drew her casement-curtain by,  
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.  
She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, 'I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead!'

Upon the middle of the night,  
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow;  
The cock sung out an hour ere light:  
From the dark fen the oxen's low  
Came to her: without hope of change,  
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed  
morn

About the lonely moated grange.  
She only said, 'The day is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, 'I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead!'

About a stone-cast from the wall  
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
And o'er it many, round and small,  
The cluster'd marsh-mosses crept.  
Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
All silver-green with gnarled bark:  
For leagues no other tree did mark  
The level waste, the rounding gray.

She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, 'I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead!'

And ever when the moon was low,  
And the shrill winds were up and away,  
In the white curtain, to and fro,  
She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
But when the moon was very low,  
And wild winds bound within their cell,  
The shadow of the poplar fell  
Upon her bed, across her brow.  
She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, 'I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead!'

All day within the dreamy house,  
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;  
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse  
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,  
Or from the crevice peer'd about.  
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
Old voices called her from without.  
She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, 'I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead!'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
Which to the wooing wind aloof  
The poplar made, did all confound  
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour  
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
Athwart the chambers, and the day  
Was sloping toward his western bower.  
Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,  
He will not come,' she said;  
She wept, 'I am weary, weary,  
Oh God, that I were dead!'

TO —

I

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,  
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain  
The knots that tangle human creeds,  
The wounding cords that bind and strain

The heart until it bleeds,  
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
Roof not a glance so keen as thine:  
If aught of prophecy be mine,  
Thou wilt not live in vain.

II

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit;  
Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow:  
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now  
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.  
Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords  
Can do away that ancient lie;  
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

III

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,  
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,  
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
Until she be an athlete bold,  
And weary with a finger's touch  
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed;  
Like that strange angel which of old,  
Until the breaking of the light,  
Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,  
And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE

I

THOU art not steep'd in golden languors,  
No tranced summer calm is thine,  
Ever varying Madeline.  
Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,  
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
Delicious spites and darling angers,  
And airy forms of flitting change.

II

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
Revealings deep and clear are thine  
Of wealthy smiles; but who may know  
Whether smile or frown be fleetest?  
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
Who may know?  
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
Light-glooming over eyes divine,  
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,

Ever varying Madeline.  
Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
From one another,  
Each to each is dearest brother;  
Hues of the silken sheeny woof  
Momently shot into each other.  
All the mystery is thine;  
Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore,  
Ever varying Madeline.

III

A subtle, sudden flame,  
By veering passion fann'd,  
About thee breaks and dances:  
When I would kiss thy hand,  
The flush of anger'd shame  
O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown:  
But when I turn away,  
Thou, willing me to stay,  
Woost not, nor vainly wranglest;  
But, looking fixedly the while,  
All my bounding heart entanglest  
In a golden-netted smile;  
Then in madness and in bliss,  
If my lips should dare to kiss  
Thy taper fingers amorously,  
Again thou blushest angrily;  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG—THE OWL

I

WHEN cats run home and light is come,  
And dew is cold upon the ground,  
And the far-off stream is dumb,  
And the whirring sail goes round,  
And the whirring sail goes round;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch  
Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

## SECOND SONG—TO THE SAME

### SECOND SONG

#### TO THE SAME

##### I

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,  
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
Which upon the dark afloat,  
So took echo with delight,  
So took echo with delight,  
That her voice untuneful grown,  
Wears all day a fainter tone.

##### II

I would mock thy chaunt anew;  
But I cannot mimick it;  
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

### RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew  
free

In the silken sail of infancy,  
The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
The forward-flowing tide of time;  
And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
High-walled gardens green and old;  
True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
The citron-shadows in the blue:  
By garden porches on the brim,  
The costly doors flung open wide,  
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
And broider'd sofas on each side:

In sooth it was a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard  
The outlet, did I turn away

The boat-head down a broad canal  
From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moon-lit sward  
Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept  
Adown to where the water slept.  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,  
Until another night in night  
I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb  
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome  
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rillets musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low  
Down from the central fountain's flow  
Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vary-colour'd shells  
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge  
From fluted vase, and brazen urn  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells  
Half-closed, and others studded well  
With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odour in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung;  
Not he: but something which possess'd  
The darkness of the world, delight,



## RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unexpress'd,  
Apart from place, withholding time,  
But flattering the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
Slumber'd: the solemn palms were ranged  
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind:  
A sudden splendour from behind  
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,  
And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew darker from that under-flame:  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
Entranced with that place and time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—  
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round  
The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
Graven with emblems of the time,  
In honour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares  
From the long alley's latticed shade  
Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
Right to the carved cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,

After the fashion of the time,  
And humour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
As with the quintessence of flame,  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers look'd to shame  
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd  
Upon the mooned domes aloof  
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd  
Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time  
To celebrate the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
Tressed with redolent ebony,  
In many a dark delicious curl,  
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;  
The sweetest lady of the time,  
Well worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
Throne of the massive ore, from which  
Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,  
Engarlanded and diaper'd  
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd  
With merriment of kingly pride,  
Sole star of all that place and time,  
I saw him—in his golden prime,  
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

## ODE TO MEMORY

ADDRESSED TO —

I

THOU who stealest fire,  
From the fountains of the past,  
To glorify the present; oh, haste,  
Visit my low desire!  
Strengthen me, enlighten me!  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## ODE TO MEMORY

### II

Come not as thou camest of late,  
Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
On the white day; but robed in soften'd  
light

Of orient state.

Whilome thou camest with the morning  
mist,

Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
The dew-impearled winds of dawn have  
kiss'd,

When she, as thou,  
Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight  
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots  
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,  
Which in wintertide shall star  
The black earth with brilliance rare.

### III

Whilome thou camest with the morning  
mist,

And with the evening cloud,  
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my  
open breast  
(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest  
wind

Never grow sere,  
When rooted in the garden of the mind,  
Because they are the earliest of the year).

Nor was the night thy shroud.  
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest  
Thou ledest by the hand thine infant  
Hope.

The eddying of her garments caught from  
thee

The light of thy great presence; and the  
cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,  
Tho' deep not fathomless,  
Was cloven with the million stars which  
tremble

O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.  
Small thought was there of life's distress;  
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could  
dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and  
beautiful:

Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,  
Listening the lordly music flowing from  
The illimitable years.

O strengthen me, enlighten me!  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

### IV

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,  
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad  
eyes!

Thou comest not with shows of flaunting  
vines

Unto mine inner eye,  
Divinest Memory!

Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall  
Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the wall  
Of purple cliffs, aloof desried:  
Come from the woods that belt the gray  
hill-side,

The seven elms, the poplars four  
That stand beside my father's door,  
And chiefly from the brook that loves  
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,  
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,  
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,

In every elbow and turn,  
The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland,  
O! hither lead thy feet!

Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat  
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled  
folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,  
When the first matin-song hath waken'd  
loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
What time the amber morn  
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung  
cloud.

### V

Large dowries doth the raptured eye  
To the young spirit present  
When first she is wed;

And like a bride of old

In triumph led,  
With music and sweet showers  
Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.  
Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,  
In setting round thy first experiment  
With royal frame-work of wrought  
gold;

## ODE TO MEMORY

Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,  
And foremost in thy various gallery  
Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls  
Upon the storied walls;

For the discovery  
And newness of thine art so pleased thee,  
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest  
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs  
With thee unto the love thou bearest  
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,  
Ever retiring thou dost gaze

On the prime labour of thine early days:  
No matter what the sketch might be;  
Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,  
Or even a sand-built ridge  
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see  
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,

Where from the frequent bridge,  
Like emblems of infinity,  
The trenched waters run from sky to sky;  
Or a garden bower'd close  
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,  
Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,  
Or opening upon level plots  
Of crowned lilies, standing near  
Purple-spiked lavender:

Whither in after life retired  
From brawling storms,  
From weary wind,  
With youthful fancy re-inspired,  
We may hold converse with all forms  
Of the many-sided mind,  
And those whom passion hath not blinded,  
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone,  
Were how much better than to own  
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!

O strengthen me, enlighten me!  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## SONG

### I

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours  
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:

To himself he talks;  
For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh

In the walks;  
Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks  
Of the mouldering flowers:  
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;  
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

### II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,  
As a sick man's room when he taketh  
repose

An hour before death;  
My very heart faints and my whole soul  
grieves

At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,  
And the breath  
Of the fading edges of box beneath,  
And the year's last rose.

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;  
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## A CHARACTER

WITH a half-glance upon the sky  
At night he said, 'The wanderings  
Of this most intricate Universe  
Teach me the nothingness of things.'  
Yet could not all creation pierce  
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty: that the dull  
Saw no divinity in grass,  
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;  
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,  
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair  
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue: not the gods  
More purely, when they wish to charm  
Pallas and Juno sitting by:  
And with a sweeping of the arm,  
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
Devolved his rounded periods.

## A CHARACTER

Most delicately hour by hour  
He canvass'd human mysteries,  
And trod on silk, as if the winds  
Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
And stood aloof from other minds  
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
Himself unto himself he sold;  
Upon himself himself did feed:  
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
And other than his form of creed,  
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

### THE POET

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
With golden stars above;  
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn  
of scorn,  
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and  
ill,  
He saw thro' his own soul.  
The marvel of the everlasting will,  
An open scroll,

Before him lay: with echoing feet he  
threaded  
The secretest walks of fame:  
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were  
headed  
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver  
tongue,  
And of so fierce a flight,  
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore  
Them earthward till they lit;  
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field  
flower,  
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth  
anew  
Where'er they fell, behold,  
Like to the mother plant in semblance,  
grew  
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling  
The winged shafts of truth,  
To throng with stately blooms the breath-  
ing spring  
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with  
beams,  
Tho' one did fling the fire.  
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many  
dreams  
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the  
world

Like one great garden show'd,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark  
upcurl'd,  
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise  
Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning  
eyes  
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes  
Sunn'd by those orient skies;  
But round about the circles of the globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in  
flame

WISDOM, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.  
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,  
And as the lightning to the thunder  
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,  
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No  
sword

Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his*  
word  
She shook the world.

### THE POET'S MIND

#### I

Vex not thou the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit:  
Vex not thou the poet's mind;  
For thou canst not fathom it.

## THE POET'S MIND

Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river;  
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

### II

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear;  
All the place is holy ground;  
Hollow smile and frozen sneer  
Come not here.  
Holy water will I pour  
Into every spicy flower  
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.  
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.  
In your eye there is death,  
There is frost in your breath  
Which would blight the plants.  
Where you stand you cannot hear  
From the groves within  
The wild-bird's din.  
In the heart of the garden the merry bird  
chants.  
It would fall to the ground if you came  
in.  
In the middle leaps a fountain  
Like sheet lightning,  
Ever brightening  
With a low melodious thunder;  
All day and all night it is ever drawn  
From the brain of the purple mountain  
Which stands in the distance yonder:  
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,  
And the mountain draws it from Heaven  
above,  
And it sings a song of undying love;  
And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full,  
You never would hear it; your ears are so  
dull;  
So keep where you are: you are foul with  
sin;  
It would shrink to the earth if you came in.

### THE SEA-FAIRIES

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,  
Betwixt the green brink and the running  
foam,  
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms  
prest  
To little harps of gold; and while they  
mused

Whispering to each other half in fear,  
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle  
sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither  
away? fly no more.  
Whither away from the high green field,  
and the happy blossoming shore?  
Day and night to the billow the fountain  
calls:  
Down shower the gambolling waterfalls  
From wandering over the lea:  
Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,  
And thick with white bells the clover-hill  
swells  
High over the full-toned sea:  
O hither, come hither and furl your sails,  
Come hither to me and to me:  
Hither, come hither and frolic and play;  
Here it is only the mew that wails;  
We will sing to you all the day:  
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
For here are the blissful downs and dales,  
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,  
And the spangle dances in bight and  
bay,  
And the rainbow forms and flies on the  
land  
Over the islands free;  
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the  
sand;  
Hither, come hither and see;  
And the rainbow hangs on the poising  
wave,  
And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,  
And sweet shall your welcome be:  
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,  
For merry brides are we:  
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet  
words:  
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
With pleasure and love and jubilee:  
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
When the sharp clear twang of the golden  
chords  
Runs up the ridged sea.  
Who can light on as happy a shore  
All the world o'er, all the world o'er?  
Whither away? listen and stay: mariner,  
mariner, fly no more.

## THE DESERTED HOUSE

### THE DESERTED HOUSE

#### I

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
Side by side,  
Leaving door and windows wide:  
Careless tenants they!

#### II

All within is dark as night:  
In the windows is no light;  
And no murmur at the door,  
So frequent on its hinge before.

#### III

Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or thro' the windows we shall see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house.

#### IV

Come away: no more of mirth  
Is here or merry-making sound.  
The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground.

#### V

Come away: for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell;  
But in a city glorious—  
A great and distant city—have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have stayed with us!

### THE DYING SWAN

#### I

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
And loudly did lament.  
It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
And took the reed-tops as it went.

#### II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky,

Shone out their crowning snows.

One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,  
Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
And far thro' the marish green and still

The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

#### III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul  
Of that waste place with joy  
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and clear;  
And floating about the under-sky,  
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach  
stole

Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;  
But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
With a music strange and manifold,  
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold;  
As when a mighty people rejoice  
With shawms, and with cymbals, and  
harps of gold,  
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd  
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening  
star.

And the creeping mosses and clambering  
weeds,  
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,  
And the wavy swell of the sighing reeds,  
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing  
bank,  
And the silvery marish-flowers that  
throng  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song.

### A DIRGE

#### I

Now is done thy long day's work;  
Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.  
Let them rave.  
Shadows of the silver birch  
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## A DIRGE

### II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;  
Nothing but the small cold worm  
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

### III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;  
Chaunteth not the brooding bee  
Sweeter tones than calumny?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head  
From the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

### IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;  
The woodbine and eglare  
Drip sweeter dew than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

### V

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,  
Bramble roses, faint and pale,  
And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep  
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

### VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine;  
The frail bluebell peereth over  
Rare broidry of the purple clover.

Let them rave.

Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

### VII

Wild words wander here and there:  
God's great gift of speech abused  
Makes thy memory confused:  
But let them rave.

The balm-cricket carols clear  
In the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## LOVE AND DEATH

WHAT time the mighty moon was gathering light

Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,  
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes;  
When, turning round a cassia, full in view,  
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,  
And talking to himself, first met his sight:  
'You must begone,' said Death, 'these  
walks are mine.'

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans  
for flight;

Yet ere he parted said, 'This hour is thine:  
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree  
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,  
So in the light of great eternity  
Life eminent creates the shade of death;  
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,  
But I shall reign for ever over all.'

## THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

MY heart is wasted with my woe,  
Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,  
Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with  
snow,

And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,  
Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,  
Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,  
Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,  
Oriana:

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
We heard the steeds to battle going,  
Oriana;

Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,  
Oriana,

Ere I rode into the fight,  
Oriana,

## THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

While blissful tears blinded my sight  
By star-shine and by moonlight,  
    Oriana,  
I to thee my troth did plight,  
    Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,  
    Oriana:  
She watch'd my crest among them all,  
    Oriana:  
She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
When forth there stept a foeman tall,  
    Oriana,  
Atween me and the castle wall,  
    Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,  
    Oriana:  
The false, false arrow went aside,  
    Oriana:  
The damned arrow glanced aside,  
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,  
    Oriana!  
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
    Oriana!

Oh! narrow, narrow was the space,  
    Oriana.  
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
    Oriana.  
Oh! deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
The battle deepen'd in its place,  
    Oriana;  
But I was down upon my face,  
    Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
    Oriana!  
How could I rise and come away,  
    Oriana?  
How could I look upon the day?  
They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
    Oriana—  
They should have trod me into clay,  
    Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,  
    Oriana!  
O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
    Oriana!  
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,

And then the tears run down my cheek,  
    Oriana:  
What wantest thou? whom dost thou seek,  
    Oriana?

I cry aloud: none hear my cries,  
    Oriana.  
Thou comest atween me and the skies,  
    Oriana.  
I feel the tears of blood arise  
Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
    Oriana.  
Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
    Oriana.

O cursed hand! O cursed blow!  
    Oriana!  
O happy thou that liest low,  
    Oriana!  
All night the silence seems to flow  
Beside me in my utter woe,  
    Oriana.  
A weary, weary way I go,  
    Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,  
    Oriana,  
I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
    Oriana.  
Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
I dare not die and come to thee,  
    Oriana.  
I hear the roaring of the sea,  
    Oriana.

## CIRCUMSTANCE

Two children in two neighbour villages  
Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas;  
Two strangers meeting at a festival;  
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall;  
Two lives bound fast in one with golden  
    ease;  
Two graves grass-green beside a gray  
    church-tower,  
Wash'd with still rains and daisy blos-  
    somed;  
Two children in one hamlet born and  
    bred;  
So runs the round of life from hour to  
    hour.



## THE MERMAN

### THE MERMAN

#### I

Who would be  
A merman bold,  
Sitting alone,  
Singing alone  
Under the sea,  
With a crown of gold,  
On a throne?

#### II

I would be a merman bold,  
I would sit and sing the whole of the day;  
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of  
power;  
But at night I would roam abroad and play  
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,  
Dressing their hair with the white sea-  
flower;  
And holding them back by their flowing  
locks  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
Laughingly, laughingly;  
And then we would wander away, away  
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and  
high,  
Chasing each other merrily.

#### III

There would be neither moon nor star;  
But the wave would make music above us  
afar—  
Low thunder and light in the magic  
night—  
Neither moon nor star.  
We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,  
Call to each other and whoop and cry  
All night, merrily, merrily;  
They would pelt me with starry spangles  
and shells,  
Laughing and clapping their hands be-  
tween,  
All night, merrily, merrily:  
But I would throw to them back in mine  
Turkis and agate and almondine:  
Then leaping out upon them unseen  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
Laughingly, laughingly.

Oh! what a happy life were mine  
Under the hollow-hung ocean green!  
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea;  
We would live merrily, merrily.

### THE MERMAID

#### I

Who would be  
A mermaid fair,  
Singing alone,  
Combing her hair  
Under the sea,  
In a golden curl  
With a comb of pearl,  
On a throne?

#### II

I would be a mermaid fair;  
I would sing to myself the whole of the day;  
With a comb of pearl I would comb my  
hair;  
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,  
'Who is it loves me? who loves not me?'  
I would comb my hair till my ringlets  
would fall  
Low adown, low adown,  
From under my starry sea-bud crown  
Low adown and around,  
And I should look like a fountain of gold  
Springing alone  
With a shrill inner sound,  
Over the throne  
In the midst of the hall;  
Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps  
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
Round the hall where I sate, and look in  
at the gate  
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.  
And all the mermen under the sea  
Would feel their immortality  
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

#### III

But at night I would wander away, away,  
I would fling on each side my low-  
flowing locks,  
And lightly vault from the throne and play  
With the mermen in and out of the  
rocks;

## THE MERMAID

We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,  
On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson  
shells,  
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.  
But if any came near I would call, and  
shriek,  
And adown the steep like a wave I would  
leap  
From the diamond-ledges ~~that~~ jut from  
the dells;  
For I would not be kiss'd by all who would  
list,  
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea;  
They would sue me, and woo me, and  
flatter me,  
In the purple twilights under the sea;  
But the king of them all would carry me,  
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,  
In the branching jaspers under the sea;  
Then all the dry pied things that be  
In the hueless mosses under the sea  
Would curl round my silver feet silently,  
All looking up for the love of me.  
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft  
All things that are forked, and horned,  
and soft  
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of  
the sea,  
All looking down for the love of me.

### ADELINE

#### I

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
Faintly smiling Adeline,  
Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
But beyond expression fair  
With thy floating flaxen hair;  
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
Take the heart from out my breast.  
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

#### II

Whence that aery bloom of thine,  
Like a lily which the sun  
Looks thro' in his sad decline,  
And a rose-bush leans upon,  
Thou that faintly smilest still,  
As a Naiad in a well,

Looking at the set of day,  
Or a phantom two hours old  
Of a maiden past away,  
Ere the placid lips be cold?  
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline?

#### III

What hope or fear or joy is thine?  
Who talketh with thee, Adeline?  
For sure thou art not all alone.  
Do beating hearts of salient springs  
Keep measure with thine own?  
Hast thou heard the butterflies  
What they say betwixt their wings?  
Or in stillest evenings  
With what voice the violet woos  
To his heart the silver dews?  
Or when little airs arise,  
How the merry bluebell rings  
To the mosses underneath?  
Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
Of the lilies at sunrise?  
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

#### IV

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
Some spirit of a crimson rose  
In love with thee forgets to close  
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
All night long on darkness blind.  
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou  
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,  
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

#### V

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
When thou gazest at the skies?  
Doth the low-tongued Orient  
Wander from the side of the morn,  
Dripping with Sabæan spice  
On thy pillow, lowly bent  
With melodious airs lovelorn,  
Breathing Light against thy face,  
While his locks a-drooping twined  
Round thy neck in subtle ring  
Make a carcanet of rays,  
And ye talk together still,

## ADELINE

In the language wherewith Spring  
Letters cowslips on the hill?  
Hence that look and smile of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline.

### MARGARET

#### I

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,  
Your melancholy sweet and frail  
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?  
From the westward-winding flood,  
From the evening-lighted wood,  
From all things outward you have won  
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
Between the rainbow and the sun.  
The very smile before you speak,  
That dimples your transparent cheek,  
Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
The senses with a still delight  
Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
Like the tender amber round,  
Which the moon about her spreadeth,  
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

#### II

You love, remaining peacefully,  
To hear the murmur of the strife,  
But enter not the toil of life.

Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
Laid by the tumult of the fight.

You are the evening star, alway  
Remaining betwixt dark and bright:  
Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
Come to you, gleams of mellow light  
Float by you on the verge of night.

#### III

What can it matter, Margaret,  
What songs below the waning stars  
The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
Sang looking thro' his prison bars?  
Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
Just ere the falling axe did part  
The burning brain from the true heart,  
Even in her sight he loved so well?

#### IV

A fairy shield your Genius made  
And gave you on your natal day.  
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
Keeps real sorrow far away.  
You move not in such solitudes,  
You are not less divine,  
But more human in your moods,  
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,  
And less acerially blue,  
But ever trembling thro' the dew  
Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

#### V

O sweet pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
Come down, come down, and hear me  
speak:  
Tie up the ringlets on your cheek:  
The sun is just about to set,  
The arching limes are tall and shady,  
And faint, rainy lights are seen,  
Moving in the leavy beech.  
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
Where all day long you sit between  
Joy and woe, and whisper each.  
Or only look across the lawn,  
Look out below your bower-caves,  
Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn  
Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

### ROSALIND

#### I

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,  
Whose free delight, from any height of  
rapid flight,  
Stoops at all game that wing the skies,  
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,  
Careless both of wind and weather,  
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,  
Up or down the streaming wind?

#### II

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd strains,  
The shadow rushing up the sea,  
The lightning flash between the rains,  
The sunlight driving down the lea,

## ROSALIND

The leaping stream, the very wind,  
That will not stay, upon his way,  
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,  
Is not so clear and bold and free  
As you, my falcon Rosalind.  
You care not for another's pains,  
Because you are the soul of joy,  
Bright metal all without alloy.  
Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,  
And flashes off a thousand ways,  
Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays,  
Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,  
Keen with triumph, watching still  
To pierce me thro' with pointed light;  
But oftentimes they flash and glitter  
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,  
And your words are seeming-bitter,  
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter  
From excess of swift delight.

### III

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,  
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind:  
Too long you keep the upper skies;  
Too long you roam and wheel at will;  
But we must hood your random eyes,  
That care not whom they kill,  
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue  
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,  
Some red heath-flower in the dew,  
Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind  
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,  
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,  
And clip your wings, and make you love:  
When we have lured you from above,  
And that delight of frolic flight, by day or  
    night,  
From North to South,  
We'll bind you fast in silken cords,  
And kiss away the bitter words  
From off your rosy mouth.

## ELEÄNORE

### I

THY dark eyes open'd not,  
Nor first reveal'd themselves to English  
    air,  
    For there is nothing here,  
Which, from the outward to the inward  
    brought,  
Moulded thy baby thought.

Far off from human neighbourhood,  
Thou wert born, on a summer morn,  
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.  
Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd  
With breezes from our oaken glades,  
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land  
Of lavish lights, and floating shades:  
And flattering thy childish thought  
The oriental fairy brought,  
At the moment of thy birth,  
From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
And the hearts of purple hills,  
And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,  
The choicest wealth of all the earth,  
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,  
To deck thy cradle, Eleanore.

### II

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
Thro' half-open lattices  
Coming in the scented breeze,  
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
With whitest honey in fairy gardens  
    cull'd—  
A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,  
With the hum of swarming bees  
Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

### III

Who may minister to thee?  
Summer herself should minister  
To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
On golden salvers, or it may be,  
Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
Grape-thicken'd from the light, and  
    blinded  
With many a deep-hued bell-like  
    flower  
Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
And the crag that fronts the Even,  
All along the shadowing shore,  
Crimsons over an inland mere,  
Eleänore!

### IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,  
How may measured words adore  
The full-flowing harmony  
Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
Eleänore?

## ELEĀNORE

The luxuriant symmetry  
Of thy floating gracefulness,  
    Eleānore?  
Every turn and glance of thine,  
Every lineament divine,  
    Eleānore,  
And the steady sunset glow,  
That stays upon thee? For in thee  
Is nothing sudden, nothing single;  
Like two streams of incense free  
From one censer in one shrine,  
Thought and motion mingle,  
Mingle ever. Motions flow  
To one another, even as tho'  
They were modulated so  
    To an unheard melody,  
Which lives about thee, and a sweep  
Of richest pauses, evermore  
Drawn from each other mellow-deep;  
    Who may express thee, Eleānore?

### V

I stand before thee, Eleānore;  
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
Daily and hourly, more and more.  
I muse, as in a trance, the while  
    Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.  
I muse, as in a trance, when'er  
    The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
Float on to me. I would I were  
    So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,  
To stand apart, and to adore,  
Gazing on thee for evermore,  
Serene, imperial Eleānore!

### VI

Sometimes, with most intensity  
Gazing, I seem to see  
Thought folded over thought, smiling  
    asleep,  
Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep  
In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,  
I cannot veil, or droop my sight,  
But am as nothing in its light:  
As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,  
Ev'n while we gaze on it,  
Should slowly round his orb, and slowly  
    grow  
To a full face, there like a sun remain  
Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,

And draw itself to what it was before;  
So full, so deep, so slow,  
Thought seems to come and go  
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleānore.

### VII

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,  
    Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,  
Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,  
Grow golden all about the sky;  
In thee all passion becomes passionless,  
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
Losing his fire and active might  
    In a silent meditation,  
Falling into a still delight,  
    And luxury of contemplation:  
As waves that up a quiet cove  
    Rolling slide, and lying still  
    Shadow forth the banks at will:  
Or sometimes they swell and move,  
Pressing up against the land,  
With motions of the outer sea:  
    And the self-same influence  
    Controlleth all the soul and sense  
Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,  
Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
Droops both his wings, regarding thee,  
And so would languish evermore,  
Serene, imperial Eleānore.

### VIII

But when I see thee roam, with tresses  
    unconfined,  
While the amorous, odorous wind  
Breathes low between the sunset and the  
    moon;  
Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
On silken cushions half reclined;  
I watch thy grace; and in its place  
My heart a charmed slumber keeps,  
    While I muse upon thy face;  
And a languid fire creeps  
    Thro' my veins to all my frame,  
Dissolvingly and slowly: soon  
    From thy rose-red lips MY name  
Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,  
With dinning sound my ears are rife,  
My tremulous tongue faltereth,  
I lose my colour, I lose my breath,  
I drink the cup of a costly death,

## ELEANORE

Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warm-  
est life.

I die with my delight, before

I hear what I would hear from thee;

Yet tell my name again to me,

I *would* be dying evermore,

So dying ever, Eleanore.

### KATE ➤

I KNOW her by her angry air,  
Her bright black eyes, her bright black  
hair,

Her rapid laughter wild and shrill,

As laughter of the woodpecker

From the bosom of a hill.

'Tis Kate—she sayeth what she will:

For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,

Clear as the twanging of a harp.

Her heart is like a throbbing star.

Kate hath a spirit ever strung

Like a new bow, and bright and sharp

As edges of the scymetar.

Whence shall she take a fitting mate?

For Kate no common love will feel;

My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,

As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith 'the world is void of might.'

Kate saith 'the men are gilded flies.'

Kate snaps her fingers at my vows;

Kate will not hear of lovers' sighs.

I would I were an arméd knight,

Far-famed for well-won enterprise,

And wearing on my swarthy brows

The garland of new-wreathed emprise:

For in a moment I would pierce

The blackest files of clanging fight,

And strongly strike to left and right,

In dreaming of my lady's eyes.

Oh! Kate loves well the bold and  
fierce;

But none are bold enough for Kate,

She cannot find a fitting mate.

### I

My life is full of weary days,

But good things have not kept aloof,  
Nor wander'd into other ways:

I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,  
Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink  
Of that deep grave to which I go:

Shake hands once more: I cannot sink

So far—far down, but I shall know

Thy voice, and answer from below.

### II

When in the darkness over me

The four-handed mole shall scrape,

Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,

Nor wreath thy cap with doleful crape,

But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood

Grow green beneath the showery gray,

And rugged barks begin to bud,

And thro' damp holts new-flush'd with

may,

Ring sudden scritchings of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,

And on my clay her darnel grow;

Come only, when the days are still,

And at my headstone whisper low,

And tell me if the woodbines blow.

## EARLY SONNETS

### I

TO —

As when with downcast eyes we muse and  
brood,

And ebb into a former life, or seem

To lapse far back in some confused dream

To states of mystical similitude;

If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,

Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,

So that we say, 'All this hath been before,

All this hath been, I know not when or  
where.'

So, friend, when first I look'd upon your  
face,

Our thought gave answer each to each, so  
true—

Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—

That tho' I knew not in what time or place,

Methought that I had often met with you,

And either lived in either's heart and  
speech.

## EARLY SONNETS

### II

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—thou wilt be

A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;

Our dusted velvets have much need of thee:

Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,  
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily;  
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy  
To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark  
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk

Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne

Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark  
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

### III

MINE be the strength of spirit, full and free,  
Like some broad river rushing down alone,  
With the selfsame impulse wherewith he was thrown

From his loud fount upon the echoing sea:—

Which with increasing might doth forward flee

By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and isle,

And in the middle of the green salt sea  
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.  
Mine be the power which ever to its sway  
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees  
May into uncongenial spirits flow;  
Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of Florida  
Floats far away into the Northern seas  
The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

### IV

ALEXANDER

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right arm  
debased

The throne of Persia, when her Satrap  
bled

At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled

Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits, disgraced

For ever—thee (thy pathway sand-erased)  
Gliding with equal crowns two serpents led

Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-fed  
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.

There in a silent shade of laurel brown  
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine

Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries:  
High things were spoken there, unhanded

down;  
Only they saw thee from the secret shrine  
Returning with hot cheek and kindled eyes.

### V

BUONAPARTE

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts  
of oak,

Madman!—to chain with chains, and bind  
with bands

That island queen who sways the floods  
and lands

From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,  
When from her wooden walls,—lit by sure

hands,—  
With thunders, and with lightnings, and  
with smoke,—

Peal after peal, the British battle broke,  
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.

We taught him lowlier moods, when Elsinore

Heard the war moan along the distant sea,  
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with sudden

fires  
Flamed over: at Trafalgar yet once more  
We taught him: late he learned humility

Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd  
with briars.

### VI

POLAND

How long, O God, shall men be ridden  
down,

And trampled under by the last and least  
Of men? The heart of Poland hath not

ceased  
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth  
drown

The fields, and out of every smouldering  
town

## EARLY SONNETS

Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be increased,  
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East  
Transgress his ample bound to some new  
crown:—

Cries to Thee, 'Lord, how long shall these  
things be?

How long this icy-hearted Muscovite  
Oppress the region?' Us, O Just and Good,  
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn in  
three;

Us, who stand now, when we should aid  
the right—

A matter to be wept with tears of blood!

### VII

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender hand,  
And singing airy trifles this or that,  
Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch  
and stand,

And run thro' every change of sharp and  
flat;

And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,  
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy  
band,

And chased away the still-recurring gnat,  
And woke her with a lay from fairy land.  
But now they live with Beauty less and  
less,

For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,  
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious creeds;  
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,  
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,  
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

### VIII

THE form, the form alone is eloquent!  
A nobler yearning never broke her rest  
Than but to dance and sing, be gaily drest,  
And win all eyes with all accomplishment:  
Yet in the whirling dances as we went,  
My fancy made me for a moment blest  
To find my heart so near the beauteous  
breast

That once had power to rob it of content.  
A moment came the tenderness of tears,  
The phantom of a wish that once could  
move,

A ghost of passion that no smiles restore—  
For ah! the slight coquette, she cannot  
love,

And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand years,  
She still would take the praise, and care  
no more.

### IX

WAN Sculptor, weepst thou to take the  
cast

Of those dead lineaments that near thee  
lie?

O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the  
past,

In painting some dead friend from memory?  
Weep on: beyond his object Love can  
last:

His object lives: more cause to weep  
have I:

My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,  
No tears of love, but tears that Love can  
die.

I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,  
Nor care to sit beside her where she sits—  
Ah pity—hint it not in human tones,  
But breathe it into earth and close it up  
With secret death for ever, in the pits  
Which some green Christmas crams with  
weary bones.

### X

If I were loved, as I desire to be,  
What is there in the great sphere of the  
earth,

And range of evil between death and  
birth,

That I should fear,—if I were loved by  
thee?

All the inner, all the outer world of pain  
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou  
wert mine,

As I have heard that, somewhere in the  
main,

Fresh-water springs come up through  
bitter brine.

'Twere joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand  
with thee,

To wait for death—mute—careless of all  
ills,

Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge  
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills  
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the  
gorge

Below us, as far on as eye could see.



## EARLY SONNETS

### XI

#### THE BRIDESMAID

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot was tied,  
Thine eyes so wept that they could hardly  
see;  
Thy sister smiled and said, 'No tears for  
me!  
A happy bridesmaid makes a happy bride.'  
And then, the couple standing side by  
side,  
Love lighted down between them full of  
glee

And over his left shoulder laugh'd at thee,  
'O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride.'  
And all at once a pleasant truth I learn'd,  
For while the tender service made thee  
weep,  
I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not  
hide,  
And prest thy hand, and knew the press  
return'd,  
And thought, 'My life is sick of single  
sleep:  
O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride!'

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

### AND OTHER POEMS

#### THE LADY OF SHALOTT

##### PART I

ON either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
And thro' the field the road runs by  
To many-tower'd Camelot;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers  
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
By slow horses; and unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
Skimming down to Camelot:  
But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
Or at the casement seen her stand?  
Or is she known in all the land,  
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,  
Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
From the river winding clearly,  
Down to tower'd Camelot:  
And by the moon the reaper weary,  
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
Listening, whispers, 'Tis the fairy  
Lady of Shalott.'

##### PART II

THERE she weaves by night and day  
A magic web with colours gay.  
She has heard a whisper say,  
A curse is on her if she stay  
To look down to Camelot.  
She knows not what the curse may be,  
And so she weaveth steadily,  
And little other care hath she,  
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
That hangs before her all the year,  
Shadows of the world appear.  
There she sees the highway near  
Winding down to Camelot:  
There the river eddy whirls,  
And there the surly village-churls,  
And the red cloaks of market girls,  
Pass onward from Shalott.

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
An abbot on an ambling pad,  
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;  
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
The knights come riding two and two:  
She hath no loyal knight and true,  
The Lady of Shalott. ♣

But in her web she still delights  
To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
For often thro' the silent nights  
A funeral, with plumes and lights  
And music, went to Camelot:  
Or when the moon was overhead,  
Came two young lovers lately wed;  
'I am half sick of shadows,' said  
The Lady of Shalott.

### PART III

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot:  
And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;  
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;  
From underneath his helmet flow'd  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
'Tirra lirra,' by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side;  
'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

### PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complain-  
ing,  
Heavily the low sky raining  
Over tower'd Camelot;  
Down she came and found a boat  
Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse  
Like some bold seer in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance  
Did she look to Camelot.  
And at the closing of the day  
She loos'd the chain, and down she lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Thro' the noises of the night  
She floated down to Camelot:  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,

Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.  
For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot.  
Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name,  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near  
Died the sound of royal cheer;  
And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
All the knights at Camelot:  
But Lancelot mused a little space;  
He said, 'She has a lovely face;  
God in his mercy lend her grace,  
*The Lady of Shalott.*'

### MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

With one black shadow at its feet,  
The house thro' all the level shines,  
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
And silent in its dusty vines:  
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
An empty river-bed before,  
And shallows on a distant shore,  
In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,  
And 'Ave Mary,' night and morn,  
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
From brow and bosom slowly down  
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew  
Her streaming curls of deepest brown  
To left and right, and made appear,  
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,  
Her melancholy eyes divine,

The home of woe without a tear.  
And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,  
'Madonna, sad is night and morn,'  
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and past  
Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
Low on her knees herself she cast,  
Before Our Lady murmur'd she;  
Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace  
To help me of my weary load.'  
And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
The clear perfection of her face.  
'Is this the form,' she made her moan,  
'That won his praises night and  
morn?'  
And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake alone,  
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,  
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,  
But day increased from heat to heat,  
On stony drought and steaming salt;  
Till now at noon she slept again,  
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain  
grass,  
And heard her native breezes pass,  
And runlets babbling down the glen.  
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,  
And murmuring, as at night and  
morn,  
She thought, 'My spirit is here alone,  
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:  
She felt he was and was not there.  
She woke: the babble of the stream  
Fell, and, without, the steady glare  
Shrank one sick willow sere and small.  
The river-bed was dusty-white;  
And all the furnace of the light  
Struck up against the blinding wall.  
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan  
More inward than at night or morn,  
'Sweet Mother, let me not here alone  
Live forgotten and die forlorn.'

And, rising, from her bosom drew  
Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be true,  
To what is loveliest upon earth.'

## MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look at her with slight, and say  
'But now thy beauty flows away,  
So be alone for evermore.'  
'O cruel heart,' she changed her tone,  
'And cruel love, whose end is scorn,  
Is this the end, to be left alone,  
To live forgotten, and die forlorn?'

But sometimes in the falling day  
An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look into her eyes and say,  
'But thou shalt be alone no more.'  
And flaming downward over all  
From heat to heat the day decreased,  
And slowly rounded to the east  
The one black shadow from the wall.  
'The day to night,' she made her  
moan,  
'The day to night, the night to  
morn,  
And day and night I am left alone  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
There came a sound as of the sea;  
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
And lean'd upon the balcony.  
There all in spaces rosy-bright  
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
And deepening thro' the silent spheres  
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.  
And weeping then she made her moan,  
'The night comes on that knows not  
morn,  
When I shall cease to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

### THE TWO VOICES

A STILL small voice spake unto me,  
'Thou art so full of misery,  
Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said;  
'Let me not cast in endless shade  
What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply;  
'To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil  
Of his old husk: from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

'He dried his wings: like gauze they grew;  
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  
A living flash of light he flew.'

I said, 'When first the world began,  
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,  
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest  
Proportion, and, above the rest,  
Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied;  
'Self-blinded are you by your pride:  
Look up thro' night: the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
That in a boundless universe  
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes and fears  
Could find no statelier than his peers  
In yonder hundred million spheres?'

It spake, moreover, in my mind:  
'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,  
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:  
'No compound of this earthly ball  
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly;  
'Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,  
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?'

'Or will one beam be less intense,  
When thy peculiar difference  
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not know,'  
But my full heart, that work'd below,  
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:  
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
Surely 'twere better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
Nor any train of reason keep:  
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.'

## THE TWO VOICES

I said, 'The years with change advance:  
If I make dark my countenance,  
I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might take,  
Ev'n yet.' But he: 'What drug can make  
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept, 'Tho' I should die, I know  
That all about the thorn will blow  
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

'And men, thro' novel spheres of thought  
Still moving after truth long sought,  
Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some time,  
Sooner or later, will gray prime  
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for light,  
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells,  
The fuzzy prickle fire the dells,  
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine hour,  
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower  
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,  
'Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead.

'Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main?

'Or make that morn, from his cold crown  
And crystal silence creeping down,  
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let  
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

'Twere better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said, 'When I am gone away,  
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,  
Doing dishonour to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,  
'To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,  
Than once from dread of pain to die.

'Sick art thou—a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so bound  
To men, that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground?

'The memory of the wither'd leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;  
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,  
'From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

'Nay—rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warm'd me in the days  
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,  
Among the tents I paused and sung,  
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,  
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

'Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life—

'Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

## THE TWO VOICES

'As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb about—

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law:

'At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light withdraws,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

'In some good cause, not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown;

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,  
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears  
His country's war-song thrill his ears:

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman's line is broke,  
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.'

'Yea!' said the voice, 'thy dream was good,  
While thou abodest in the bud.  
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower,  
Who is it that could live an hour?

'Then comes the check, the change, the fall,  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
There is one remedy for all.

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,  
Link'd month to month with such a chain  
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death and birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.  
So were thy labour little-worth.

'That men with knowledge merely play'd,  
I told thee—hardly nigher made,  
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,  
Named man, may hope some truth to find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

'Cry, faint not: either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb: the summits slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost  
strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like;

'And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl!  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl?  
There is one remedy for all.'

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,  
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die?

'I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven:

'Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream;

'But heard, by secret transport led,  
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head—

'Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

## THE TWO VOICES

'He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with  
stones:

'But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face.'

The sullen answer slid betwixt:  
'Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,  
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

I said, 'I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

'And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new:

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence:

'For I go, weak from suffering here:  
Naked I go, and void of cheer:  
What is it that I may not fear?'

'Consider well,' the voice replied,  
'His face, that two hours since hath died;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride?

'Will he obey when one commands?  
Or answer should one press his hands?  
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast:  
There is no other thing express'd  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and meek:  
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

'His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonour to her race—

'His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honour, some to shame,—  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave.

'High up the vapours fold and swim:  
About him broods the twilight dim:  
The place he knew forgetteth him.'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said,  
'These things are wrapt in doubt and  
dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

'The sap dries up: the plant declines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

'I found him when my years were few;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.

'From grave to grave the shadow crept:  
In her still place the morning wept:  
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

'The simple senses crown'd his head:  
"Omega! thou art Lord," they said,  
"We find no motion in the dead."

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

'Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the sense?

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly:  
His heart forebodes a mystery:  
He names the name Eternity.

'That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find.  
He sows himself on every wind.

'He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And thro' thick veils to apprehend  
A labour working to an end.

'The end and the beginning vex  
His reason: many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

'He knows a baseness in his blood  
At such strange war with something good,  
He may not do the thing he would.

## THE TWO VOICES

'Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

'Ah! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt,

'But thou canst answer not again.  
With thine own weapon art thou slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

'The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve.'

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced.

'Where wert thou when thy father play'd  
In his free field, and pastime made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade?

'A merry boy they call'd him then,  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again.

'Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man:

'Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,  
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his days:

'A life of nothings, nothing-worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth!'

'These words,' I said, 'are like the rest;  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast:

'But if I grant, thou mightst defend  
The thesis which thy words intend—  
That to begin implies to end;

'Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould?

'I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, how'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

'It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

'As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping thro' from state to state.

'As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again.

'So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and touch.

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

'Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of night;

'Or if thro' lower lives I came—  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame—

'I might forget my weaker lot;  
For is not our first year forgot?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

'And men, whose reason long was blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

'Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory:

'For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own material prime?

'Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

'Of something felt, like something here;  
Of something done, I know not where;  
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. 'I talk,' said he  
'Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality.'



## THE TWO VOICES

'But thou,' said I, 'hast missed thy mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,  
By making all the horizon dark.

'Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might ensue  
With this old soul in organs new?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human breath  
Has ever truly long'd for death.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;  
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest:  
Passing the place where each must rest,  
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,  
With measured footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walk'd demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on:  
I spoke, but answer came there none:  
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighbourhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
'I see the end, and know the good.'

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes:

Such seem'd the whisper at my side:  
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?' I  
cried.

'A hidden hope,' the voice replied:

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature's living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers:  
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along:  
The woods were fill'd so full with song,  
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong;

And all so variously wrought,  
I marvell'd how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Rejoice!'

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
His double chin, his portly size,  
And who that knew him could forget  
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?  
The slow wise smile that, round about  
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,  
Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
And full of dealings with the world?

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

In yonder chair I see him sit,  
Three fingers round the old silver cup—  
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up  
With summer lightnings of a soul  
So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,  
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:  
My own sweet Alice, we must die.  
There's somewhat in this world amiss  
Shall be unriddled by and by.  
There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
But more is taken quite away.  
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?  
I least should breathe a thought of pain.  
Would God renew me from my birth  
I'd almost live my life again.  
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
And once again to woo thee mine—  
It seems in after-dinner talk  
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy  
Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
Where this old mansion mounted high  
Looks down upon the village spire:  
For even here, where I and you  
Have lived and loved alone so long,  
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'  
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove  
In firry woodlands making moan;  
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
I had no motion of my own.  
For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—  
Still hither thither idly sway'd  
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear  
The milldam rushing down with noise,  
And see the minnows everywhere  
In crystal eddies glance and poise  
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
Below the range of stepping-stones,  
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung  
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
When after roving in the woods  
('Twas April then), I came and sat  
Below the chestnuts, when their buds  
Were glistening to the breezy blue;  
And on the slope, an absent fool,  
I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
An echo from a measured strain,  
Beat time to nothing in my head  
From some odd corner of the brain.  
It haunted me, the morning long,  
With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
The phantom of a silent song,  
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood  
I watch'd the little circles die;  
They past into the level flood,  
And there a vision caught my eye;  
The reflex of a beauteous form,  
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,  
That morning, on the casement-edge  
A long green box of mignonette,  
And you were leaning from the ledge  
And when I raised my eyes, above  
They met with two so full and bright—  
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,  
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear  
That I should die an early death:  
For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.  
My mother thought, What ails the boy?  
For I was alter'd, and began  
To move about the house with joy,  
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,  
The sleepy pool above the dam,  
The pool beneath it never still,  
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,  
The dark round of the dripping wheel,  
The very air about the door  
Made misty with the floating meal.

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
When April nights began to blow,  
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
I saw the village lights below;  
I knew your taper far away,  
And full at heart of trembling hope,  
From off the wold I came, and lay  
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill;  
And 'by that lamp,' I thought, 'she sits!'  
The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.  
'O that I were beside her now!  
O will she answer if I call?  
O would she give me vow for vow,  
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?'

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;  
And, in the pauses of the wind,  
Sometimes I heard you sing within;  
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the  
blind.

At last you rose and moved the light,  
And the long shadow of the chair  
Flitted across into the night,  
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,  
The lanes, you know, were white with  
may,  
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek  
Flush'd like the coming of the day;  
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,  
You would, and would not, little one!  
Although I pleaded tenderly,  
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought  
To yield consent to my desire:  
She wish'd me happy, but she thought  
I might have look'd a little higher;  
And I was young—too young to wed:  
'Yet must I love her for your sake;  
Go fetch your Alice here,' she said:  
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:  
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;  
This dress and that by turns you tried,  
Too fearful that you should not please.

I loved you better for your fears,  
I knew you could not look but well;  
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,  
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,  
The doubt my mother would not see;  
She spoke at large of many things,  
And at the last she spoke of me;  
And turning look'd upon your face,  
As near this door you sat apart,  
And rose, and, with a silent grace  
Approaching, press'd your heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song  
I gave you, Alice, on the day  
When, arm in arm, we went along,  
A pensive pair, and you were gay  
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,  
As in the nights of old, to lie  
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,  
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,  
And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
That I would be the jewel  
That trembles in her ear:  
For hid in ringlets day and night,  
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle  
About her dainty dainty waist,  
And her heart would beat against me,  
In sorrow and in rest:  
And I should know if it beat right,  
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,  
And all day long to fall and rise  
Upon her balmy bosom,  
With her laughter or her sighs,  
And I would lie so light, so light,  
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells—  
True love interprets—right alone.  
His light upon the letter dwells,  
For all the spirit is his own.  
So, if I waste words now, in truth  
You must blame Love. His early rage  
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,  
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
Like mine own life to me thou art,  
Where Past and Present, wound in one,  
Do make a garland for the heart:

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

So sing that other song I made,  
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,  
The day, when in the chestnut shade  
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,  
Can he pass, and we forget?  
Many suns arise and set.  
Many a chance the years beget.  
Love the gift is Love the debt.  
Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.  
Love is made a vague regret  
Eyes with idle tears are wet  
Idle habit links us yet.  
What is love? for we forget:  
Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True  
wife,

Round my true heart thine arms entwine  
My other dearer life in life,

Look thro' my very soul with thine!  
Untouch'd with any shade of years,  
May those kind eyes for ever dwell!  
They have not shed a many tears,  
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their part  
Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,  
The still affection of the heart  
Became an outward breathing type,  
That into stillness past again,  
And left a want unknown before;  
Although the loss had brought us pain,  
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,  
The woven arms, seem but to be  
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
The comfort, I have found in thee:  
But that God bless thee, dear—who  
wrought

Two spirits to one equal mind—  
With blessings beyond hope or thought,  
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,  
To yon old mill across the wolds;  
For look, the sunset, south and north,  
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
And fires your narrow casement glass,  
Touching the sullen pool below:  
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

## FATIMA

O LOVE, Love, Love! O withering might!  
O sun, that from thy noonday height  
Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,  
Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,  
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
Below the city's eastern towers:  
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers:  
I roll'd among the tender flowers:  
I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth;  
I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his  
name,  
From my swift blood that went and came  
A thousand little shafts of flame  
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.  
O Love, O fire! once he drew  
With one long kiss my whole soul thro'  
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
He cometh quickly: from below  
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow  
Before him, striking on my brow.  
In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,  
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
And from beyond the noon a fire  
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher  
The skies stoop down in their desire;  
And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce  
delight,  
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,  
All naked in a sultry sky,  
Droops blinded with his shining eye:  
I *will* possess him or will die.  
I will grow round him in his place,  
Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

## CENONE

### CENONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
 The swimming vapour slopes athwart the  
 glen,  
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to  
 pine,  
 And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand  
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway  
 down  
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below them  
 roars  
 The long brook falling thro' the clov'n  
 ravine  
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
 Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
 Stands up and takes the morning: but in  
 front  
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
 Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
 The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon  
 Mournful Cēnone, wandering forlorn  
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.  
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her  
 neck  
 Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.  
 She, leaning on a fragment twined with  
 vine,  
 Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-  
 shade  
 Sloped downward to her seat from the upper  
 cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:  
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass:  
 The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
 Rests like a shadow, and the winds are  
 dead.  
 The purple flower droops: the golden bee  
 Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.  
 My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,  
 My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,  
 And I am all weary of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O  
 Caves

That house the cold crown'd snake! O  
 mountain brooks,  
 I am the daughter of a River-God,  
 Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
 My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
 Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
 A cloud that gather'd shape: for it may be  
 That, while I speak of it, a little while  
 My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
 Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
 And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine:  
 Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
 Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,  
 white-hooved,  
 Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:  
 Far up the solitary morning smote  
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-  
 dropt eyes  
 I sat alone: white-breasted like a star  
 Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard  
 skin  
 Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny  
 hair  
 Cluster'd about his temples like a God's:  
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow  
 brightens  
 When the wind blows the foam, and all my  
 heart  
 Went forth to embrace him coming ere he  
 came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-white  
 palm  
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd  
 And listen'd, the full-flowing river of  
 speech  
 Came down upon my heart.

"My own Cēnone,  
 Beautiful-brow'd Cēnone, my own soul,  
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind in-  
 grav'n  
 'For the most fair,' would seem to award it  
 thine,

## CENONE

As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
Of movement, and the charm of married  
brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
And added "This was cast upon the board,  
When all the full-faced presence of the  
Gods

Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon  
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere  
due:

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
Delivering, that to me, by common voice  
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,  
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the  
cave

Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard  
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
It was the deep midnight: one silvery cloud  
Had lost his way between the piney sides  
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they  
came,

Naked they came to that smooth-swarded  
bower,  
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,  
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,  
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
With bunch and berry and flower thro'  
and thro'.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and  
lean'd  
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
Then first I heard the voice of her, to  
whom  
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that  
grows

Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
Proffer of royal power, ample rule

Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue  
Wherewith to embellish state, "from many  
a vale

And river-sunder'd champaign clothed  
with corn,

Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.  
Honour," she said, "and homage, tax and  
toll,

From many an inland town and haven  
large,

Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing  
citadel

In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Still she spake on and still she spake of  
power,

"Which in all action is the end of all;  
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred  
And throned of wisdom—from all neigh-  
bour crowns

Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon  
from me,

From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee  
king-born,

A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
Should come most welcome, seeing men,  
in power

Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd  
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit  
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought  
of power

Flatter'd his spirit; But Pallas where she  
stood

Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs  
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear  
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
The while, above, her full and earnest eye  
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek  
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-  
control,  
These three alone lead life to sovereign  
power.

## ÆNONE

Yet not for power (power of herself  
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by  
law,

Acting the law we live by without fear;  
And, because right is right, to follow right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Again she said: "I woo thee not with gifts.  
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed  
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure  
That I shall love thee well and cleave to  
thee,

So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,  
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,  
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,  
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown  
will,

Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,  
Commensure perfect freedom."

"Here she ceas'd,  
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O Paris,  
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not,  
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,  
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian  
wells,

With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
From her warm brows and bosom her deep  
hair

Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot  
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded  
form

Between the shadows of the vine-bunches  
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she  
moved.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise thee

The fairest and most loving wife in Greece."  
She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for  
fear:

But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,  
And I beheld great Herès's angry eyes,  
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
And I was left alone within the bower;  
And from that time to this I am alone,  
And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?  
My love hath told me so a thousand times.  
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail  
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving  
is she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my  
arms  
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips  
prest  
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling  
dew

Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains  
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,  
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy  
ledge

High over the blue gorge, and all between  
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath  
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark  
morn

The panther's roar came muffled, while I  
sat

Low in the valley. Never, never more  
Shall lone Ænone see the morning mist  
Sweep thro' them; never see them over-  
laid

With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,  
Between the loud stream and the trembling  
stars.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,  
Among the fragments tumbled from the  
glens,  
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her

## CENONE

The Abominable, that uninvited came  
Into the fair Peleian banquet-hall,  
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
And bred this change; that I might speak  
my mind,  
And tell her to her face how much I hate  
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand  
times,  
In this green valley, under this green hill,  
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?  
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?  
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!  
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my  
face?  
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my  
weight?  
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating  
cloud,  
There are enough unhappy on this earth,  
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:  
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
Thou weightest heavy on the heart within,  
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
Do shape themselves within me, more and  
more,  
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
Dead sounds at night come from the in-  
most hills,  
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a woman  
Conjectures of the features of her child  
Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder comes  
Across me: never child be born of me,  
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to  
me  
Walking the cold and starless road of  
Death  
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go  
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come  
forth

Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
What this may be I know not, but I know  
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,  
All earth and air seem only burning fire.'

## THE SISTERS

WE were two daughters of one race:  
She was the fairest in the face:  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
They were together, and she fell;  
Therefore revenge became me well.  
O the Earl was fair to see!

She died: she went to burning flame:  
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.  
The wind is howling in turret and tree.  
Whole weeks and months, and early and  
late,  
To win his love I lay in wait:  
O the Earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bad him come;  
I won his love, I brought him home.  
The wind is roaring in turret and tree.  
And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head:  
O the Earl was fair to see!  
I kiss'd his eyelids into rest:  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.  
The wind is raging in turret and tree.  
I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well.  
O the Earl was fair to see!

I rose up in the silent night:  
I made my dagger sharp and bright.  
The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
As half-asleep his breath he drew,  
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.  
O the Earl was fair to see!

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,  
He look'd so grand when he was dead.  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
I wrapt his body in the sheet,  
And laid him at his mother's feet.  
O the Earl was fair to see!



†

TO —

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,  
(For you will understand it) of a soul,  
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,  
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen  
In all varieties of mould and mind)  
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,  
Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are  
three sisters

That doat upon each other, friends to man,  
Living together under the same roof,  
And never can be sunder'd without tears.  
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall  
be

Shut out from Love, and on her threshold  
lie

Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
Was common clay ta'en from the common  
earth

Moulded by God, and temper'd with the  
tears

Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.  
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd  
brass

I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf  
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.  
My soul would live alone unto herself  
In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and  
round,' I said,  
'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast  
shade  
Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer readily:  
'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
So royal-rich and wide.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Four courts I made, East, West and South  
and North,  
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran  
a row  
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,  
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the  
sky  
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one  
swell  
Across the mountain stream'd below  
In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd  
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd  
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, 'And who shall gaze  
upon  
My palace with unblinded eyes,  
While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
And that sweet incense rise?'

For that sweet incense rose and never  
fail'd,  
And, while day sank or mounted higher  
The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and  
traced,  
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,  
And tipt with frost-like spires.

## THE PALACE OF ART

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\*   \*   \*   \*

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did  
pass,  
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace  
stood,  
All various, each a perfect whole  
From living Nature, fit for every mood  
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and  
blue,  
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter  
blew  
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of  
sand,  
And some one pacing there alone,  
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.  
You seem'd to hear them climb and  
fall  
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing  
caves,  
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
By herds upon an endless plain,  
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,  
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.  
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind  
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones  
and slags,  
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
All barr'd with long white cloud the scorn-  
ful crags,  
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight  
pour'd

On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep—all things in order  
stored,  
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,  
As fit for every mood of mind,  
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was  
there  
Not less than truth design'd.

\*   \*   \*   \*  
\*   \*   \*   \*

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonynx  
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,  
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;  
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise  
A group of Houris bow'd to see  
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon  
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw  
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian  
king to hear  
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,  
And many a tract of palm and rice,  
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd  
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
From off her shoulder backward borne:  
From one hand droop'd a crocus: one hand  
grasp'd  
The mild bull's golden horn.

## THE PALACE OF ART

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
 Half-buried in the Eagle's down,  
 Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
 Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair  
 Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
 Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,  
 Not less than life, design'd.

\*   \*   \*   \*  
 \*   \*   \*   \*

Then in the towers I placed great bells  
 that swung,  
 Moved of themselves, with silver sound;  
 And with choice paintings of wise men I  
 hung  
 The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a scrapp strong,  
 Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;  
 And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd  
 his song,  
 And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;  
 A million wrinkles carved his skin;  
 A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,  
 From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
 Many an arch high up did lift,  
 And angels rising and descending met  
 With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
 With cycles of the human tale  
 Of this wide world, the times of every land  
 So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
 Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and  
 stings;

Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
 The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or  
 bind

All force in bonds that might endure,  
 And here once more like some sick man  
 declined,  
 And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod: and those great  
 bells

Began to chime. She took her throne:  
 She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,  
 To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' coloured  
 flame

Two godlike faces gazed below;  
 Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,  
 The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion  
 were

Full-welling fountain-heads of change,  
 Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd  
 fair

In diverse raiment strange:

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,  
 emerald, blue,

Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,  
 And from her lips, as morn from Memnon,  
 drew

Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong

Her low preamble all alone,  
 More than my soul to hear her echo'd  
 song

Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful  
 mirth,

Joying to feel herself alive,  
 Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible  
 earth,

Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: 'All these are  
 mine,

And let the world have peace or wars,  
 'Tis one to me.' She—when young night  
 divine

Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—

Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
 And pure quintessences of precious oils  
 In hollow'd moons of gems,

## THE PALACE OF ART

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands  
and cried,

'I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,  
Be flatter'd to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my various eyes!  
O shapes and hues that please me well!  
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O God-like isolation which art mine,  
I can but count thee perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening droves of  
swine  
That range on yonder plain.

'In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,  
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;  
And oft some brainless devil enters in,  
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she prate  
And of the rising from the dead,  
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate;  
And at the last she said:

'I take possession of man's mind and deed.  
I care not what the sects may brawl.  
I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
But contemplating all.'

\* \* \* \*

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,  
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd: so three  
years

She prosper'd: on the fourth she fell,  
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,  
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
God, before whom ever lie bare  
The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd  
her sight  
The airy hand confusion wrought,

Wrote, 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite  
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
Fell on her, from which mood was born  
Scorn of herself; again, from out that  
mood  
Laughter at her self-scorn.

'What! is not this my place of strength,'  
she said,  
'My spacious mansion built for me,  
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were  
laid  
Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes; and unawares  
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears  
of blood,  
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of  
flame,  
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon she  
came,  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,  
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,  
Left on the shore; that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from  
the land  
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had  
curl'd.

'No voice,' she shrieked in that lone hall,  
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this  
world;  
One deep, deep silence all!'

## THE PALACE OF ART

She, mouldering with the dull earth's  
    mouldering sod,  
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
    Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,  
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
    No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,  
And ever worse with growing time,  
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
    And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound  
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,  
In doubt and great perplexity,  
A little before moon-rise hears the low  
    Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound  
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry  
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, 'I have  
    found  
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.  
There comes no murmur of reply.  
What is it that will take away my sin,  
    And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly finished,  
She threw her royal robes away.  
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,  
    'Where I may mourn and pray.'

'Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are  
So lightly, beautifully built:  
Perchance I may return with others there  
    When I have purged my guilt.'

### LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,  
Of me you shall not win renown:  
You thought to break a country heart  
For pastime, ere you went to town.

At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
I saw the snare, and I retired:  
The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
I know you proud to bear your name,  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
    Too proud to care from whence I came.  
Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
A heart that doats on truer charms.  
A simple maiden in her flower  
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Some meeker pupil you must find,  
For were you queen of all that is,  
I could not stoop to such a mind.  
You sought to prove how I could love,  
And my disdain is my reply.  
The lion on your old stone gates  
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
You put strange memories in my head.  
Not thrice your branching limes have  
    blown  
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.  
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies:  
A great enchantress you may be;  
But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
When thus he met his mother's view,  
She had the passions of her kind,  
She spake some certain truths of you.  
Indeed I heard one bitter word  
That scarce is fit for you to hear;  
Her manners had not that repose  
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
There stands a spectre in your hall:  
The guilt of blood is at your door:  
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.  
You held your course without remorse,  
To make him trust his modest worth,  
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,  
And slew him with your noble birth.

## LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
From yon blue heavens above us bent  
The gardener Adam and his wife  
Smile at the claims of long descent.  
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good.  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,  
You pine among your halls and towers:  
The languid light of your proud eyes  
Is wearied of the rolling hours.

In glowing health, with boundless wealth,  
But sickening of a vague disease,  
You know so ill to deal with time,  
You needs must play such pranks as  
these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
If time be heavy on your hands,  
Are there no beggars at your gate,  
Nor any poor about your lands?  
Oh! teach the orphan-boy to read,  
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,  
Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
And let the foolish yeoman go.

## THE MAY QUEEN

YOU must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear;  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year;  
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day;  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine;  
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline:  
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,  
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,  
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break:  
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,  
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree?  
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,  
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,  
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.  
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be:  
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that to me?  
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,  
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen;  
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

## THE MAY QUEEN

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,  
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;  
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;  
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,  
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year:  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

## NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a merry day;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May;  
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on the pane:  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high:  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,  
In the early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,  
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,  
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

## THE MAY QUEEN

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light  
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;  
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool  
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,  
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.  
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,  
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now;  
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go;  
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,  
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;  
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;  
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you say,  
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight for evermore,  
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door;  
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green:  
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor:  
Let her take 'em: they are hers: I shall never garden more:  
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush that I set  
About the parlour-window and the box of mignonette.

Goodnight, sweet mother: call me before the day is born.  
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;  
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

### CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am;  
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.  
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year!  
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,  
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,  
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,  
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,  
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done!  
But still I think it can't be long before I find release;  
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!  
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there!  
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!  
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.



## THE MAY QUEEN

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.  
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in:  
Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that could be,  
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,  
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet:  
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,  
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call;  
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all;  
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,  
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear;  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;  
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,  
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,  
And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said;  
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,  
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, 'It's not for them: it's mine.'  
And if it come three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.  
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,  
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know  
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.  
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.  
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret;  
There's many a worthier than I, would make him happy yet.  
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife;  
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;  
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.  
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine—  
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done  
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun—  
For ever and for ever with those just souls and true—  
And what is life, that we should moan? why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—  
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come—  
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—  
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

### THE LOTOS-EATERS

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed toward  
the land,

'This mounting wave will roll us shore-  
ward soon.'

In the afternoon they came unto a land  
In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did  
swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;  
And like a downward smoke, the slender  
stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall  
did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward  
smoke,

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did  
go;

And some thro' wavering lights and  
shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

From the inner land: far off, three  
mountain-tops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with

showery drops,  
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the

woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown  
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the  
dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border'd with palm, and many a winding  
vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale;  
A land where all things always seem'd the  
same!

And round about the keel with faces pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters  
came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they  
gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave

Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the  
grave;

And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did  
make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;  
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
Of child, and wife, and slave; but ever-  
more

Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,  
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.

Then some one said, 'We will return no  
more;'

And all at once they sang, 'Our island home  
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer  
roam.'

### CHORIC SONG

#### I

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from  
the blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers  
weep,

And from the craggy ledge the poppy  
hangs in sleep.

#### II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from  
weariness?

All things have rest: why should we toil  
alone,

We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy  
balm;  
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
'There is no joy but calm!'  
Why should we only toil, the roof and  
crown of things?

### III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,  
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.  
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
Drops in a silent autumn night.  
All its allotted length of days,  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

### IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
Death is the end of life; ah, why  
Should life all labour be?  
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward the  
grave  
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:  
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or  
dreamful ease.

### V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward  
stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream!  
To dream and dream, like yonder amber  
light,  
'Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on  
the height;

To hear each other's whisper'd speech;  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melan-  
choly;  
To muse and brood and live again in  
memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy  
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an  
urn of brass!

### VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
And dear the last embraces of our wives  
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd  
change:  
For surely now our household hearths are  
cold:  
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:  
And we should come like ghosts to trouble  
joy.  
Or else the island princes over-bold  
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel  
sings  
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten  
things.  
Is there confusion in the little isle?  
Let what is broken so remain.  
The Gods are hard to reconcile:  
'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
There is confusion worse than death,  
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
Long labour unto aged breath,  
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars  
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the  
pilot-stars.

### VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blow-  
ing lowly)  
With half-dropt eyelid still,  
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
To watch the long bright river drawing  
slowly  
His waters from the purple hill—

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

To hear the dewy echoes calling  
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined  
vine—  
To watch the emerald-colour'd water  
falling  
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath  
divine!  
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling  
brine,  
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out  
beneath the pine.

### VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:  
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:  
All day the wind breathes low with mel-  
lower tone:  
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
Round and round the spicy downs the  
yellow Lotos-dust is blown.  
We have had enough of action, and of  
motion we,  
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,  
when the surge was seething free,  
Where the wallowing monster spouted his  
foam-fountains in the sea.  
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an  
equal mind,  
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie  
reclined  
On the hills like Gods together, careless of  
mankind.  
For they lie beside their nectar, and the  
bolts are hurl'd  
Far below them in the valleys, and the  
clouds are lightly curl'd  
Round their golden houses, girdled with  
the gleaming world:  
Where they smile in secret, looking over  
wasted lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,  
roaring deeps and fiery sands,  
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and  
sinking ships, and praying hands.  
But they smile, they find a music centred  
in a doleful song  
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient  
tale of wrong,  
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words  
are strong;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that  
cleave the soil,  
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with  
enduring toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and  
wine and oil;  
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis  
whisper'd—down in hell  
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian  
valleys dwell,  
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of  
asphodel.  
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than  
toil, the shore  
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind  
and wave and oar;  
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not  
wander more.

### A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
'*The Legend of Good Women*,' long ago  
Sung by the morning star of song, who  
made  
His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose  
sweet breath  
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art  
Held me above the subject, as strong  
gales  
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my  
heart,  
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In  
every land  
I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song  
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning  
stars,  
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and  
wrong,  
And trumpets blown for wars;

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging  
hoofs;  
And I saw crowds in column'd sanc-  
tuaries;  
And forms that pass'd at windows and on  
roofs  
Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold; heroes tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall;  
Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with  
heated blasts  
That run before the fluttering tongues  
of fire;  
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and  
masts,  
And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen  
plates,  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers  
woes,  
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron  
grates,  
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when  
to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same  
way,  
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove to  
speak,  
As when a great thought strikes along the  
brain,  
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town;  
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing  
thought  
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and  
did creep

Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd,  
and brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far  
In an old wood: fresh-wash'd in coolest  
dew  
The maiden splendours of the morning star  
Shook in the stedfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean  
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with  
clearest green,  
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey  
done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight  
plain,  
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine  
turn'd  
Their humid arms festooning tree to  
tree,  
And at the root thro' lush green grasses  
burn'd  
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I  
knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn  
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks  
drench'd in dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame  
The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone  
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unbliss-  
ful clime,  
'Pass freely thro': the wood is all thine own,  
Until the end of time.'

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

At length I saw a lady within call,  
 Still *er* than chisell'd marble, standing  
 there;  
 A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
 And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise  
 Froze my swift speech: *she* turning on  
 my face  
 The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
 Spoke slowly in her place.

'I had great beauty: ask thou not my  
 name:  
 No one can be more wise than destiny.  
 Many drew swords and died. Where'er I  
 came  
 I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field  
 Myself for such a face had boldly died,'  
 I answer'd free; and turning I appeal'd  
 To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,  
 To her full height her stately stature  
 draws;  
 'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted with a  
 curse:  
 This woman was the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that sad place,  
 Which men call'd Aulis in those iron  
 years:  
 My father held his hand upon his face;  
 I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was thick  
 with sighs  
 As in a dream. Dimly I could descry  
 The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish  
 eyes,  
 Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat;  
 The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and  
 the shore;  
 The bright death quiver'd at the victim's  
 throat;  
 Touch'd; and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward brow;  
 'I would the white cold heavy-plunging  
 foam,  
 Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep  
 below,  
 Then when I left my home.'

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence  
 drear,  
 As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea:  
 Sudden I heard a voice that cried, 'Come  
 here,  
 That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,  
 One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd;  
 A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold  
 black eyes,  
 Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:  
 'I govern'd men by change, and so I  
 sway'd  
 All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a  
 man.  
 Once, like the moon, I made

'The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
 According to my humour ebb and flow.  
 I have no men to govern in this wood:  
 That makes my only woe.

'Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not  
 bend  
 One will; nor tame and tutor with mine  
 eye  
 That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee,  
 friend,  
 Where is Mark Antony?

'The man, my lover, with whom I rode  
 sublime  
 On Fortune's neck: we sat as God by  
 God:  
 The Nilus would have risen before his time  
 And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit  
 Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus. O  
 my life  
 In Egypt! O the dalliance and the wit,  
 The flattery and the strife,

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

'And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's  
alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
Contented there to die!

'And there he died: and when I heard my  
name  
Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook  
my fear  
Of the other: with a worm I balk'd his fame.  
What else was left? look here!

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
The polish'd argent of her breast to sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a  
laugh,  
Showing the aspick's bite.)

'I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,  
A name for ever!—lying robed and  
crown'd,  
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down and  
glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all  
change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for  
delight;  
Because with sudden motion from the  
ground  
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd  
with light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest  
darts;  
As once they drew into two burning  
rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty  
hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard  
A noise of some one coming thro' the  
lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested bird  
That claps his wings at dawn.

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late and  
soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the  
dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with  
beams divine:  
All night the splinter'd crags that wall the  
dell  
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sunshine  
laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the  
door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and  
tied  
To where he stands,—so stood I, when  
that flow  
Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
A maiden pure; as when she went along  
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome  
light,  
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth: 'Heaven heads the  
count of crimes  
With that wild oath.' She render'd  
answer high:

'Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times  
I would be born and die.

'Single I grew, like some green plant,  
whose root  
Creeps to the garden water-pipes be-  
neath,  
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to  
fruit  
Changed, I was ripe for death.

'My God, my land, my father—these did  
move  
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature  
gave,

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

- Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love  
Down to a silent grave.
- 'And I went mourning, "No fair Hebrew boy  
Shall smile away my maiden blame among  
The Hebrew mothers"—emptied of all joy,  
Leaving the dance and song,
- 'Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow  
Beneath the battled tower.
- 'The light white cloud swam over us.  
Anon  
We heard the lion roaring from his den;  
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,  
Or, from the darken'd glen,
- 'Saw God divide the night with flying flame,  
And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became  
A solemn scorn of ills.
- 'When the next moon was roll'd into the sky,  
Strength came to me that equall'd my desire.  
How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire!
- 'It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,  
That I subdued me to my father's will;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still.
- 'Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer  
On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her face  
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.
- She lock'd her lips: she left me where I stood:  
'Glory to God,' she sang, and past afar,
- Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,  
Toward the morning-star.
- Losing her carol I stood pensively,  
As one that from a casement leans his head,  
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,  
And the old year is dead.
- 'Alas! alas!' a low voice, full of care,  
Murmur'd beside me: 'Turn and look on me:  
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,  
If what I was I be.
- 'Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!  
O me, that I should ever see the light!  
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor  
Do hunt me, day and night.'
- She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust:  
To whom the Egyptian: 'O, you tamely died!  
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist,  
and thrust  
The dagger thro' her side.'
- With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,  
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams  
Ruled in the eastern sky.
- Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,  
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance  
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,  
A light of ancient France;
- Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,  
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,  
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,  
Sweet as new buds in Spring.



## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

No memory labours longer from the deep  
 Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden  
 ore  
 That glimpses, moving up, than I from  
 sleep  
 To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull  
 pain  
 Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to  
 strike

Into that wondrous track of dreams again!  
 But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been  
 blest,

Desiring what is mingled with past years,  
 In yearnings that can never be exprest  
 By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest  
 art,

Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
 Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
 Faints, faded by its heat.

### THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something well:  
 While all the neighbours shoot thee round,  
 I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
 Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
 Are thine; the range of lawn and park:  
 The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,  
 All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,  
 Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
 With that gold dagger of thy bill  
 To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,  
 Cold February loved, is dry:  
 Plenty corrupts the melody  
 That made thee famous once, when young:

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
 Now thy flute-notes are changed to  
 coarse,

I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
 As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing  
 While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
 Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,  
 Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

### THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
 And the winter winds are wearily sigh-  
 ing:

Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
 And tread softly and speak low,  
 For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die;  
 You came to us so readily,  
 You lived with us so steadily,  
 Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still: he doth not move:  
 He will not see the dawn of day.  
 He hath no other life above.

He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,  
 And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go;  
 So long as you have been with us,  
 Such joy as you have seen with us,  
 Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim;  
 A jollier year we shall not see.  
 But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
 And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
 He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die;  
 We did so laugh and cry with you,  
 I've half a mind to die with you,  
 Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
 But all his merry quips are o'er.  
 To see him die, across the waste  
 His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
 But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.

The night is starry and cold, my  
 friend,

And the New-year blithe and bold,  
 my friend,

Comes up to take his own.

## THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

How hard he breathes! over the snow  
I heard just now the crowing cock.  
The shadows flicker to and fro:  
The cricket chirps: the light burns low:  
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.  
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you:  
What is it we can do for you?  
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
Alack! our friend is gone.  
Close up his eyes: tie up his chin:  
Step from the corpse, and let him in  
That standeth there alone,  
And waiteth at the door.  
There's a new foot on the floor, my  
friend,  
And a new face at the door, my friend,  
A new face at the door.

### TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows  
More softly round the open world,  
And gently comes the world to those  
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and invade  
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs are  
nursed,  
Fall into shadow, soonest lost:  
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love  
He lends us; but, when love is grown  
To ripeness, that on which it throve  
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas!  
In grief I am not all unlearn'd;  
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass;  
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me  
Once more. Two years his chair is seen  
Empty before us. That was he  
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer; for this star  
Rose with you thro' a little arc  
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother: his mute dust  
I honour and his living worth:  
A man more pure and bold and just  
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,  
Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.  
Great Nature is more wise than I:  
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,  
I will not even preach to you,  
'Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.  
She loveth her own anguish deep  
More than much pleasure. Let her will  
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say 'God's ordinance  
Of Death is blown in every wind;'  
For that is not a common chance  
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
In all our hearts, as mournful light  
That broods above the fallen sun,  
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace! Memory standing near  
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat  
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
How *should* I soothe you anyway,  
Who miss the brother of your youth?  
Yet something I did wish to say:

For he too was a friend to me:  
Both are my friends, and my true breast  
Bleedeth for both: yet it may be  
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make  
Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease  
Although myself could almost take  
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

## TO J. S.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace:  
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.  
Sleep full of rest from head to feet;  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

### ON A MOURNER

#### I

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
Imitates God, and turns her face  
To every land beneath the skies,  
Counts nothing that she meets with base,  
But lives and loves in every place;

#### II

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,  
And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
The swamp, where humm'd the drop-  
ping snipe,  
With moss and braided marish-pipe;

#### III

And on thy heart a finger lays,  
Saying, 'Beat quicker, for the time  
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways  
Are pleasant, and the beech and lime  
Put forth and feel a gladder clime.'

#### IV

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
Going before to some far shrine,  
Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,  
Till all thy life one way incline  
With one wide Will that closes thine.

#### V

And when the zoning eve has died  
Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,  
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and  
bride,  
From out the borders of the morn,  
With that fair child betwixt them born.

#### VI

And when no mortal motion jars  
The blackness round the tombing sod,  
Thro' silence and the trembling stars  
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have  
trod,  
And Virtue, like a household god

#### VII

Promising empire; such as those  
Once heard at dead of night to greet  
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose  
With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

---

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
The land, where girt with friends or  
foes

A man may speak the thing he will;  
A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom slowly broadens down  
From precedent to precedent:

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But by degrees to fullness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive thought  
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute;

Tho' Power should make from land to land  
The name of Britain trebly great—  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,  
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

---

## OF OLD SAT FREEDOM

OF old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet:  
Above her shook the starry lights:  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then step she down thro' town and field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men reveal'd  
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
And, King-like, wears the crown:

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
Make bright our days and light our  
dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes!

---

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-brought  
From out the storied Past, and used  
Within the Present, but transfused  
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
For English natures, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings  
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings  
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness, neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for day,  
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;  
But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
Before her to whatever sky  
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years:  
Cut Prejudice against the grain:  
But gentle words are always gain:  
Regard the weakness of thy peers:

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
Of pension, neither count on praise:  
It grows to guerdon after-days:  
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch:

Nor clinging to some ancient saw;  
Not master'd by some modern term;  
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm:  
And in its season bring the law;

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
With Life, that, working strongly,  
binds—  
Set in all lights by many minds,  
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
And moist and dry, devising long,  
'Thro' many agents making strong,  
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
We all are changed by still degrees,  
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
To ingroove itself with that which flies,  
And work, a joint of state, that plies  
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act;  
For all the past of Time reveals  
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom—  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
Completion in a painful school;  
Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
New Majesties of mighty States—

## LOVE THOU THY LAND

The warders of the growing hour,  
But vague in vapour, hard to mark;  
And round them sea and air are dark  
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
Is bodied forth the second whole.  
Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
And heap their ashes on the head;  
To shame the boast so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall close,  
That Principles are rain'd in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,  
But with his hand against the hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
Would serve his kind in deed and word,  
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,  
That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke  
From either side, nor veil his eyes:  
And if some dreadful need should rise  
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke:

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
As we bear blossom of the dead;  
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

### ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

O THOU, that sendest out the man  
To rule by land and sea,  
Strong mother of a Lion-line,  
Be proud of those strong sons of thine  
Who wrench'd their rights from thee!

What wonder, if in noble heat  
Those men thine arms withstood,  
Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,  
And in thy spirit with thee fought—  
Who sprang from English blood!

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,  
Lift up thy rocky face,  
And shatter, when the storms are black,  
In many a streaming torrent back,  
The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law  
The growing world assume,  
Thy work is thine—The single note  
From that deep chord which Hampden  
smote  
Will vibrate to the doom.

## THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
Her rags scarce held together;  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd rhyme and reason,  
'Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,  
It is a stormy season.'

She caught the white goose by the leg,  
A goose—'twas no great matter.  
The goose let fall a golden egg  
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,  
And ran to tell her neighbours;  
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,  
And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able-bodied;  
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,  
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
She felt her heart grow prouder:  
But ah! the more the white goose laid  
It clack'd and cackled louder.

## THE GOOSE

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there;  
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle:  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

'A quinsy choke thy cursed note!'  
Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
'Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,  
I will not bear it longer.' ➤

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat;  
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew that,  
And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They flounder'd all together,  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather:

He took the goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd words of scorning;  
'So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder:

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, 'The Devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger!'

## ENGLISH IDYLS

### AND OTHER POEMS

#### THE EPIC

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—  
The game of forfeits done—the girls all  
kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard  
Hall,  
The host, and I sat round the wassail-  
bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd: and there we held  
a talk,  
How all the old honour had from Christmas  
gone,  
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd  
games  
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out  
With cutting eights that day upon the  
pond,  
Where, three times slipping from the outer  
edge,  
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard  
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
Now harping on the church-commis-  
sioners,  
Now hawking at Geology and schism;

Until I woke, and found him settled down  
Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world, 'at home was little  
left,  
And none abroad: there was no anchor,  
none,  
To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his  
hand  
On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by  
him.'  
'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-  
bowl.'  
'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that  
way  
At college: but another which you had,  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),  
What came of that?' 'You know,' said  
Frank, 'he burnt  
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve  
books'—  
And then to me demanding why? 'Oh, sir,  
He thought that nothing new was said, or  
else  
Something so said 'twas nothing—that a  
truth  
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:  
God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.

## THE EPIC

It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,'  
said Hall,

'Why take the style of those heroic times?  
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,  
Nor we those times; and why should any  
man

Remodel models? these twelve books of  
mine

Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,  
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.'

'But I,'

Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from  
this hearth

And have it: keep a thing, its use will come.  
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'

He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse  
'That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my  
ears;

For I remember'd Everard's college fame  
When we were Freshmen: then at my  
request

He brought it; and the poet little urged,  
But with some prelude of disparagement,  
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,  
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

### MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter sea;  
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,  
King Arthur: then, because his wound  
was deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
Whereof this world holds record. Such a  
sleep

They sleep—the men I loved. I think that  
we

Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

I perish by this people which I made,—  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
again

To rule once more—but let what will be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride: for thou remem-  
berest how

In those old days, one summer noon, an  
arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
ful,

Holding the sword—and how I row'd  
across

And took it, and have worn it, like a king:  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known:  
But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere:  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring  
me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee  
word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he  
stept

And in the moon athwart the place of  
tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-wind  
sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, step-  
ping down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excali-  
bur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran  
forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the  
hilt:

## MORTE D'ARTHUR

For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,

This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur concealed  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:

'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as becom'd  
Thy féalty, nor like a noble knight:  
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;

But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud,  
'And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.

What good should follow this, if this were done?

What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself?

The King is sick, and knows not what he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."  
So might some old man speak in the aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much fame were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur, breathing heavily:

'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,



## MORTE D'ARTHUR

And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock

By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.  
Then spoke King Arthur, drawing  
thicker breath:

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clotned in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:

'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear,  
'Quick, quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry

Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right

The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed

heels—  
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,

And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them; and descending they were ware

That all the decks were dense with stately forms

## MORTE D'ARTHUR

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream  
—by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold—and  
from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one  
comes,

Or hath come, since the making of the  
world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in  
the barge,'

And to the barge they came. There those  
three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King,  
and wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed  
his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining  
loud,

And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face  
was white

And colourless, and like the wither'd moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing  
east;

And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with  
drops

Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dias-throne—were parch'd  
with dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
fringed his lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the King;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in  
rest,

From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my  
eyes?

For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble  
chance,

And every chance brought out a noble  
knight.

Such times have been not since the light  
that led

The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dis-  
solved

Which was an image of the mighty world;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the  
years,

Among new men, strange faces, other  
minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the  
barge:

'The old order changeth, yielding place to  
new,

And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the  
world.

Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I have  
done

May He within Himself make pure! but  
thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought  
by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let  
thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or  
goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
prayer

Both for themselves and those who call  
them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of  
God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
To the island-valley of Avilion;

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-  
lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with summer  
sea,

## MORTE D'ARTHUR

Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away.

King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,  
'Arthur is come again: he cannot die.'

Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as fair;'

And, further inland, voices echo'd—'Come  
With all good things, and war shall be no more.'

At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed

The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light, that long

Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared  
and fell:

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,

And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!' but we

Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—

Perhaps some modern touches here and there

Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—

Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;

I know not: but we sitting, as I said,  
The cock crew loud; as at that time of year

The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:  
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,

'There now—that's nothing!' drew a little back,

And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,  
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue:

And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem'd  
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,

Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams

Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,

There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER

### OR, THE PICTURES

THIS morning is the morning of the day,  
When I and Eustace from the city went  
To see the Gardener's Daughter; I and he,

Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete  
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew

The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;  
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.  
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws

The greater to the lesser, long desired  
A certain miracle of symmetry,

A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summ'd up and closed in little;—Juliet,

she

So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she  
To me myself, for some three careless moons,

The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not

Such touches are but embassies of love,  
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found

Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,  
And said to me, she sitting with us then,

'When will you paint like this?' and I replied,

(My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)

'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love, unperceived,

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER; OR, THE PICTURES

A more ideal Artist he than all,  
Came, drew your pencil from you, made  
those eyes

Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front of  
March.'

And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see  
The Gardener's daughter: trust me, after  
that,

You scarce can fail to match his master-  
piece.'

And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite  
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.

News from the humming city comes to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;

And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear  
The windy clanging of the minster clock;  
Although between it and the garden lies

A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad  
stream,

That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,  
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between  
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd  
kine,

And all about the large lime feathers low,  
The lime a summer home of murmurous  
wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,  
Grew, seldom seen; not less among us lived  
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not  
heard

Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where  
was he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
That, having seen, forgot? The common  
mouth,

So gross to express delight, in praise of her  
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
Would play with flying forms and images,  
Yet this is also true, that, long before

I look'd upon her, when I heard her name  
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
And told me I should love. A crowd of  
hopes,

That sought to sow themselves like winged  
seeds,

Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm  
To one that travels quickly, made the air  
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,  
That verged upon them, sweeter than the  
dream

Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark  
East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
For ever in itself the day we went

To see her. All the land in flowery squares,  
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large  
cloud

Drew downward: but all else of heaven  
was pure

Up to the Sun, and May from verge to  
verge,

And May with me from head to heel. And  
now,

As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were  
The hour just flown, that morn with all its  
sound,

(For those old Mays had thrice the life of  
these,)

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to  
graze,

And, where the hedge-row cuts the path-  
way, stood,

Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,  
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods  
Came voices of the well-contented doves.

The lark could scarce get out his notes for  
joy,

But shook his song together as he near'd  
His happy home, the ground. To left and  
right,

The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;  
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;

The redcap whistled; and the nightingale  
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to  
me,

'Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,  
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think  
you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song?

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER; OR, THE PICTURES

Or have they any sense of why they sing?  
And would they praise the heavens for  
what they have?

And I made answer, 'Were there nothing  
else

For which to praise the heavens but only  
love,

That only love were cause enough for  
praise.'

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my  
thought,

And on we went; but ere an hour had  
pass'd,

We reach'd a meadow slanting to the  
North;

Down which a well-worn pathway courted  
us

To one green wicket in a privet hedge;

This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk

Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;

And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume,  
blew

Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.

The garden stretches southward. In the  
midst

A cedar spread his dark-green layers of  
shade.

The garden-glasses glanced, and momentarily

The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps the  
house.'

He nodded, but a moment afterwards

He cried, 'Look! look!' Before he ceased  
I turn'd

And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern  
rose,

That, flowering high, the last night's gale  
had caught,

And blown across the walk. One arm  
aloft—

Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the  
shape—

Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,

A single stream of all her soft brown hair

Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the  
flowers

Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering

Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—

Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering  
down,

But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have  
danced

The greensward into greener circles, dipt,  
And mix'd with shadows of the common  
ground!

But the full day dwelt on her brows, and  
sunn'd

Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,  
And doubled his own warmth against her  
lips,

And on the bounteous wave of such a  
breast

As never pencil drew. Half light, half  
shade,

She stood, a sight to make an old man  
young.

So rapt, we near'd the house; but she,  
a Rose

In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,  
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance  
turn'd

Into the world without; till close at hand,  
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,

This murmur broke the stillness of that air  
Which brooded round about her:

'Ah, one rose,  
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers  
cull'd,

Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on  
lips

Less exquisite than thine.'

She look'd: but all  
Suffused with blushes—neither self-pos-  
sess'd

Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and  
that,

Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,  
And dropt the branch she held, and turn-  
ing, wound

Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips

For some sweet answer, tho' no answer  
came,

Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,

In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,  
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there

Till every daisy slept, and Love's white  
star

Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the  
dusk.

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER; OR, THE PICTURES

So home we went, and all the livelong  
way

With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.  
'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the top of  
Art.

You cannot fail but work in hues to dim  
The Titianic Flora. Will you match  
My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master,  
Love,

A more ideal Artist he than all.'

So home I went, but could not sleep for  
joy,

Reading her perfect features in the gloom,  
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,  
And shaping faithful record of the glance  
That graced the giving—such a noise of  
life

Swarm'd in the golden present, such a  
voice

Call'd to me from the years to come, and  
such

A length of bright horizon rimm'd the  
dark.

And all that night I heard the watchman  
peal

The sliding season: all that night I heard  
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy  
hours.

The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,  
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,  
Distilling odours on me as they went  
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir  
to all,

Made this night thus. Henceforward squall  
nor storm

Could keep me from that Eden where she  
dwelt.

Light pretexes drew me; sometimes a  
Dutch love

For tulips; then for roses, moss or musk,  
To grace my city rooms; or fruits and  
cream

Served in the weeping elm; and more and  
more

A word could bring the colour to my  
cheek;

A thought would fill my eyes with happy  
dew;

Love trebled life within me, and with each  
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,

One after one, thro' that still garden  
pass'd;

Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
Danced into light, and died into the shade;

And each in passing touch'd with some  
new grace

Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by  
day,

Like one that never can be wholly known,  
Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an  
hour

For Eustace, when I heard his deep 'I  
will,'

Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to  
hold

From thence thro' all the worlds: but I  
rose up

Full of his bliss, and following her dark  
eyes

Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd  
The wicket-gate, and found her standing  
there.

There sat we down upon a garden  
mound,

Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,  
Between us, in the circle of his arms

Enwound us both; and over many a range  
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,

Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
Reveal'd their shining windows: from them  
clash'd

The bells; we listen'd; with the time we  
play'd,

We spoke of other things; we coursed  
about

The subject most at heart, more near and  
near,

Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling  
round

The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to  
her,

Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,  
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,

Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;

And in that time and place she answer'd  
me,

And in the compass of three little words,  
More musical than ever came in one,

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER; OR, THE PICTURES

The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
Made me most happy, faltering, 'I am  
thine.'

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say  
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,  
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,  
Merged in completion? Would you learn  
at full

How passion rose thro' circumstantial  
grades

Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed  
I had not staid so long to tell you all,  
But while I mused came Memory with sad  
eyes,  
Holding the folded annals of my youth;  
And while I mused, Love with knit brows  
went by,

And with a flying finger swept my lips,  
And spake, 'Be wise: not easily forgiven  
Are those, who setting wide the doors that  
bar

The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
Let in the day.' Here, then, my words have  
end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of fare-  
wells—

Of that which came between, more sweet  
than each,

In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves  
That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs  
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,  
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not  
tell

Of difference, reconciliation, pledges  
given,

And vows, where there was never need of  
vows,

And kisses, where the heart on one wild  
leap

Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above  
The heavens between their fairy fleeces  
pale

Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting  
stars;

Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,  
Spread the light haze along the river-  
shores,

And in the hollows; or as once we met  
Unheeded, tho' beneath a whispering rain  
Night slid down one long stream of sighing  
wind,

And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have been  
intent

On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it  
holds

May not be dwelt on by the common day.  
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy  
soul;

Make thine heart ready with thine eyes:  
the time

Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,  
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,  
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!  
Now the most blessed memory of mine  
age.

### DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode  
William and Dora. William was his son,  
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,  
And often thought, 'I'll make them man  
and wife.'

Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
And yearn'd toward William; but the  
youth, because

He had been always with her in the house,  
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day  
When Allan call'd his son, and said, 'My  
son:

I married late, but I would wish to see  
My grandchild on my knees before I die:  
And I have set my heart upon a match.  
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well  
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.  
She is my brother's daughter: he and I  
Had once hard words, and parted, and he  
died

In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred  
His daughter Dora: take her for your wife;  
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and  
day,

For many years.' But William answer'd  
short;

'I cannot marry Dora; by my life,  
I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man  
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and  
said:

## DORA

'You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!

But in my time a father's word was law,  
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;  
Consider, William: take a month to think,  
And let me have an answer to my wish;  
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,

And never more darken my doors again.'  
But William answer'd madly; bit his lips,  
And broke away. The more he look'd at her

The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;

But Dora bore them meekly. Then before  
The month was out he left his father's house,

And hired himself to work within the fields;

And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed

A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing,  
Allan call'd

His niece and said: 'My girl, I love you well;

But if you speak with him that was my son,  
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,

My home is none of yours. My will is law.'  
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,

'It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!'

And days went on, and there was born a boy

To William; then distresses came on him;  
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,  
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.

But Dora stored what little she could save,  
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know

Who sent it; till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought

Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:

'I have obey'd my uncle until now,  
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me

This evil came on William at the first.  
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,  
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,

And for this orphan, I am come to you:  
You know there has not been for these five years

So full a harvest: let me take the boy,  
And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad

Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone.'

And Dora took the child, and went her way

Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.

Far off the farmer came into the field  
And spied her not; for none of all his men  
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;  
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,

But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.  
But when the morrow came, she rose and took

The child once more, and sat upon the mound;

And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
That grew about, and tied it round his hat  
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.

Then when the farmer pass'd into the field  
He spied her, and he left his men at work,  
And came and said: 'Where were you yesterday?

Whose child is that? What are you doing here?'

So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
And answer'd softly, 'This is William's child!'

'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not  
Forbid you, Dora?' Dora said again:

'Do with me as you will, but take the child,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!'

And Allan said, 'I see it is a trick  
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
I must be taught my duty, and by you!



## DORA

You knew my word was law, and yet you dared

To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy; But go you hence, and never see me more.'

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell

At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands, And the boy's cry came to her from the field,

More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,

Remembering the day when first she came, And all the things that had been. She bow'd down

And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd, And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood

Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.

And Dora said, 'My uncle took the boy; But, Mary, let me live and work with you: He says that he will never see me more.'

Then answer'd Mary, 'This shall never be, That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:

And, now I think, he shall not have the boy, For he will teach him hardness, and to slight

His mother; therefore thou and I will go, And I will have my boy, and bring him home;

And I will beg of him to take thee back: But if he will not take thee back again, Then thou and I will live within one house, And work for William's child, until he grows Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.

The door was off the latch: they peep'd, and saw

The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,

Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm, And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,

Like one that loved him: and the lad stretch'd out

And babbled for the golden seal, that hung From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.

Then they came in: but when the boy beheld

His mother, he cried out to come to her: And Allan set him down, and Mary said:

'O Father!—if you let me call you so—I never came a-begging for myself, Or William, or this child; but now I come For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.

O Sir, when William died, he died at peace With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said, He could not ever rue his marrying me—I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said That he was wrong to cross his father thus:

"God bless him!" he said, "and may he never know

The troubles I have gone thro'!" Then he turn'd

His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am! But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight

His father's memory; and take Dora back, And let all this be as it was before.'

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face By Mary. There was silence in the room; And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—

'I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd my son.

I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.

May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.

Kiss me, my children.'

Then they clung about The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.

And all the man was broken with remorse; And all his love came back a hundredfold; And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child

Thinking of William.

So those four abode Within one house together; and as years Went forward, Mary took another mate; But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

## AUDLEY COURT

### AUDLEY COURT

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and  
not a room  
For love or money. Let us picnic there  
At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast  
Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow  
quay,

To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the boat,  
And breathing of the sea. 'With all my  
heart,'

Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro'  
the swarm,

And rounded by the stillness of the beach  
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd  
The flat red granite; so by many a sweep  
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we  
reach'd

The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro'  
all

The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,  
And cross'd the garden to the gardener's  
lodge,

With all its casements bedded, and its walls  
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis  
laid

A damask napkin wrought with horse and  
hound,

Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of  
home,

And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,  
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret  
lay,

Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks  
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,  
A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat  
And talk'd old matters over; who was dead,  
Who married, who was like to be, and how  
The races went, and who would rent the  
hall:

Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce  
it was

This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the  
farm,

The four-field system, and the price of  
grain;

And struck upon the corn-laws, where we  
split,

And came again together on the king  
With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud;  
And, while the blackbird on the pippin  
hung

To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and  
sang—

'Oh! who would fight and march and  
countermarch,

Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,  
And shovell'd up into some bloody trench  
Where no one knows? but let me live my  
life.

'Oh! who would cast and balance at a  
desk,

Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd  
stool,

Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.

'Who'd serve the state? for if I carved  
my name

Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,  
I might as well have traced it in the sands;

The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.  
'Oh! who would love? I woo'd a woman

once,

But she was sharper than an eastern wind,  
And all my heart turn'd from her, as a  
thorn

Turns from the sea; but let me live my  
life.'

He sang his song, and I replied with  
mine:

I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir  
Robert's pride,

His books—the more the pity, so I said—  
Came to the hammer here in March—and  
this—

I set the words, and added names I knew.

'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream  
of me:

Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is  
mine.

'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;

Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

'Sleep, breathing health and peace upon  
her breast:

## AUDLEY COURT

Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip:

I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.

'I go, but I return: I would I were

The pilot of the darkness and the dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.'

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,  
The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,

My friend; and I, that having wherewithal,  
And in the fallow leisure of my life

A rolling stone of here and everywhere,  
Did what I would; but ere the night we rose

And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just

In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf  
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
The limit of the hills; and as we sank  
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,

The town was hush'd beneath us: lower down

The bay was oily calm; the harbour-buoy,  
Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,  
With one green sparkle ever and anon  
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

### WALKING TO THE MAIL

*John.* I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look

Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.  
Is yon plantation where this byway joins  
The turnpike?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by?

*James.* The mail? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see?  
No, not the County Member's with the vane:

Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half

A score of gables.

*James.* That? Sir Edward Head's:  
But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

*John.* Oh, his. He was not broken.

*James.*

No, sir, he,  
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood  
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid  
his face

From all men, and commercing with himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily life—  
That keeps us all in order more or less—  
And sick of home went overseas for change.

*John.* And whither?

*James.* Nay, who knows? he's here and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with him,  
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

*John.* What's that?

*James.* You saw the man—on Monday,  
was it?—

There by the humpback'd willow; half  
stands up

And bristles; half has fall'n and made a  
bridge;

And there he caught the younker tickling  
trout—

Caught *in flagrante*—what's the Latin  
word?—

*Delicto*: but his house, for so they say,  
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook  
The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at  
doors,

And rummaged like a rat: no servant  
stay'd:

The farmer vext packs up his beds and  
chairs,

And all his household stuff; and with his  
boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,  
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him,

'What!

You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flitting,' says  
the ghost

(For they had pack'd the thing among the  
beds,)

'Oh well,' says he, 'you flitting with us  
too—

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home  
again.'

*John.* He left his wife behind; for so I  
heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my lady  
once;

A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

## WALKING TO THE MAIL

*John.* Oh yet but I remember, ten years back—  
'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—

You could not light upon a sweeter thing:  
A body slight and round, and like a pear  
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin  
As clean and white as ~~præet~~ when it  
flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and  
they that loved  
At first like dove and dove were cat and  
dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager,  
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame  
and pride,  
New things and old, himself and her, she  
sour'd

To what she is: a nature never kind!  
Like men, like manners: like breeds like,  
they say:

Kind nature is the best: those manners  
next

That fit us like a nature second-hand;  
Which are indeed the manners of the great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this bill  
that past,  
And fear of change at home, that drove  
him hence.

*James.* That was the last drop in the cup  
of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff  
brought

A Chartist pike. You should have seen  
him wince

As from a venomous thing: he thought  
himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry  
Should break his sleep by night, and his  
nice eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody  
thumbs

Sweat on his blazon'd chairs; but, sir, you  
know

That these two parties still divide the  
world—

Of those that want, and those that have:  
and still

The same old sore breaks out from age to  
age

With much the same result. Now I myself,  
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy  
Destructive, when I had not what I would.  
I was at school—a college in the South:

There lived a flyflint near; we stole his  
fruit,

His hens, his eggs; but there was law for  
us;

We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,  
With meditative grunts of much content,  
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and  
mud.

By night we dragg'd her to the college  
tower

From her warm bed, and up the cork-  
screw stair

With hand and rope we haled the groaning  
sow,

And on the leads we kept her till she  
pigg'd.

Large range of prospect had the mother  
sow,

And but for daily loss of one she loved  
As one by one we took them—but for  
this—

As never sow was higher in this world—  
Might have been happy: but what lot is  
pure?

We took them all, till she was left alone  
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

*John.* They found you out?

*James.* Not they.  
*John.* Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a man?  
His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who  
are sound,

That we should mimic this raw fool the  
world,

Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or  
whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows  
To Pity—more from ignorance than will.

But put your best foot forward, or I  
fear

That we shall miss the mail: and here it  
comes

With five at top: as quaint a four-in-hand  
As you shall see—three pyebalds and a  
roan.

## EDWIN MORRIS; OR, THE LAKE

### EDWIN MORRIS

#### OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a  
year,

My one Oasis in the dust and drouth  
Of city life! I was a sketcher then:  
See here, my doing: curves of mountain,  
bridge,

Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
When men knew how to build, upon a rock  
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock:  
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,  
New-comers from the Mersey, million-  
aires.

Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chimned  
bulk

Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake  
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull  
The curate; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the  
names,  
Long learned names of agaric, moss and  
fern,  
Who forged a thousand theories of the  
rocks,  
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to  
swim,  
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
His own—I call'd him Crichton, for he  
seem'd  
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,  
And his first passion; and he answer'd me;  
And well his words became him: was he not  
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he spoke.

'My love for Nature is as old as I;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,  
And three rich sennights more, my love  
for her,  
My love for Nature and my love for her,  
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,  
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.  
To some full music rose and sank the sun,  
And some full music seem'd to move and  
change

With all the varied changes of the dark,  
And either twilight and the day between;  
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again  
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet  
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to  
breathe.'

Or this or something like to this he spoke.  
Then said the fat-faced curate Edward  
Bull,

'I take it, God made the woman for the  
man,

And for the good and increase of the world.  
A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,  
And keeps us tight; but these unreal ways  
Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed  
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid  
stuff.

I say, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the  
world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe too  
low:

But I have sudden touches, and can run  
My faith beyond my practice into his:  
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
I scarce have other music: yet say on.  
What should one give to light on such a  
dream?'

I ask'd him half-sardonically.

'Give?  
Give all thou art,' he answer'd, and a light  
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek;  
'I would have hid her needle in my heart,  
To save her little finger from a scratch  
No deeper than the skin: my ears could  
hear

Her lightest breath; her least remark was  
worth

The experience of the wise. I went and  
came;

Her voice fled always thro' the summer  
land;

I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy  
days!

The flower of each, those moments when  
we met,

The crown of all, we met to part no more.'

## EDWIN MORRIS; OR, THE LAKE

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
To take them as I did? but something  
jarr'd;  
Whether he spoke too largely; that there  
seem'd  
A touch of something false, some self-  
conceit,  
Or over-smoothness: howsoe'er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humour, and I said:

'Friend Edwin, do not think yourself  
alone  
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,  
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and  
left?  
But you can talk: yours is a kindly vein:  
I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as much  
within;  
Have, or should have, but for a thought or  
two,  
That like a purple beech among the greens  
Looks out of place: 'tis from no want in  
her:  
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
Or something of a wayward modern mind  
Dissecting passion. Time will set me right.'

So spoke I knowing not the things that  
were.  
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward  
Bull:  
'God made the woman for the use of man,  
And for the good and increase of the  
world.'  
And I and Edwin laughed; and now we  
paused  
About the windings of the marge to hear  
The soft wind blowing over meadowy  
holms  
And alders, garden-isles; and now we left  
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,  
Delighted with the freshness and the  
sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their  
crag,  
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by  
him  
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.

'Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no  
more:  
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,  
The close, 'Your Letty, only yours;' and  
this  
Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of  
morn  
Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
My craft aground, and heard with beating  
heart  
The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving  
keel;  
And out I stept, and up I crept: she moved,  
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers:  
'Then low and sweet I whistled thrice; and  
she,  
She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith,  
I breathed  
In some new planet: a silent cousin stole  
Upon us and departed: 'Leave,' she cried,  
'O leave me!' 'Never, dearest, never: here  
I brave the worst:' and while we stood like  
fools  
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
And poodles yell'd within, and out they  
came  
Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. 'What,  
with him!  
Go' (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus);  
'him!'  
I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen  
'Him!'  
Again with hands of wild rejection 'Go!—  
Girl, get you in! She went—and in one  
month  
They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,  
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile  
And educated whisker. But for me,  
They set an ancient creditor to work:  
It seems I broke a close with force and  
arms:  
There came a mystic token from the king  
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!  
I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd:  
Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below:  
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the  
storm;  
So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to  
hear.

## EDWIN MORRIS; OR, THE LAKE

Nor cared to hear? perhaps: yet long ago  
I have pardon'd little Letty; not indeed,  
It may be, for her own dear sake but this,  
She seems a part of those fresh days to me;  
For in the dust and drouth of London life  
She moves among my visions of the lake,  
While the prime swallow dips his wing, or  
then  
While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
The light cloud smoulders on the summer  
crag.

### ST. SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
From scalp to sole one slough and crust  
of sin,  
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce  
meet  
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and  
sob,  
Battering the gates of heaven with storms  
of prayer,  
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.  
Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty  
God,  
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten  
years,  
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes  
and cramps,  
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and  
sleet, and snow;  
And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy  
rest,  
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
The meed of saints, the white robe and the  
palm.  
O take the meaning, Lord: I do not  
breathe,  
Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.  
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were  
still  
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to  
bear,

Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that  
crush'd  
My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
Thou knowest I bore this better at the  
first,  
For I was strong and hale of body then;  
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt  
away,  
Would chatter with the cold, and all my  
beard  
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,  
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with  
sound  
Of pious hymns and psalms, and some-  
times saw  
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.  
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws  
nigh;  
I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf I am,  
So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
About the column's base, and almost blind,  
And scarce can recognise the fields I know;  
And both my thighs are rotted with the  
dew;  
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,  
While my stiff spine can hold my weary  
head,  
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the  
stone,  
Have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.  
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
Who may be saved? who is it may be  
saved?  
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?  
Show me the man hath suffer'd more  
than I.  
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?  
For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn  
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here  
To-day, and whole years long, a life of  
death.  
Bear witness, if I could have found a way  
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)  
More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
I had not stinted practice, O my God.  
For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
Not this alone I bore: but while I lived  
In the white convent down the valley there,

## ST. SIMEON STYLITES

For many weeks about my loins I wore  
The rope that haled the buckets from the  
well,  
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose;  
And spake not of it to a single soul,  
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than  
this

I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.  
Three winters, that my soul might grow  
to thee,

I lived up there on yonder mountain  
side.

My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;  
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist,  
and twice

Black'd with thy branding thunder, and  
sometimes

Sucking the damps for drink, and eating  
not,

Except the spare chance-gift of those that  
came

To touch my body and be heal'd, and live:  
And they say then that I work'd miracles,  
Whereof my fame is loud amongst man-  
kind,

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou,  
O God,

Knowest alone whether this was or no.  
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with  
thee,

Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of  
twelve;

And twice three years I crouch'd on one  
that rose

Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew  
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,  
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as  
this—

Or else I dream—and for so long a time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
And this high dial, which my sorrow  
crowns—

So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and say,

'Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast suffer'd  
long

For ages and for ages!' then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,  
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies  
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are  
choked.

But yet

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the  
saints

Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on  
earth

House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome  
food,

And wear warm clothes, and even beasts  
have stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the  
light,

Bow down one thousand and two hundred  
times,

To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the  
saints;

Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake: the chill stars sparkle; I am wet  
With drenching dews, or stiff with crack-  
ling frost.

I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;  
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;

And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,  
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die:  
O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;  
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin:

'Tis their own doing; this is none of mine;  
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,  
That here come those that worship me?

Ha! ha!

They think that I am somewhat. What  
am I?

The silly people take me for a saint,  
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers:  
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness  
here)

Have all in all endured as much, and more  
Than many just and holy men, whose  
names

Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.  
What is it I can have done to merit this?



## ST. SIMEON STYLITES

I am a sinner viler than you all.

It may be I have wrought some miracles,  
And cured some halt and maim'd; but  
what of that?

It may be, no one, even among the saints,  
May match his pains with mine; but what  
of that?

Yet do not rise; for you may look on me,  
And in your looking you may kneel to God.  
Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd?  
I think you know I have some power with  
Heaven

From my long penance: let him speak his  
wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth  
from me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark!  
they shout

'St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,  
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,  
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
Can I work miracles and not be saved?  
This is not told of any. They were saints.  
It cannot be but that I shall be saved;  
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, 'Behold  
a saint!'

And lower voices saint me from above.  
Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chrysalis  
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere  
death

Spreads more and more and more, that  
God hath now

Sponged and made blank of crime's full  
record all

My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,  
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname  
Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,  
The watcher on the column till the end;  
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;  
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become  
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
From my high nest of penance here pro-  
claim

That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
Sho'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I  
lay,

A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath  
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my  
sleeve,

Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.

I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd  
again.

In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd  
my chest:

They flapp'd my light out as I read: I saw  
Their faces grow between me and my  
book;

With colt-like whinny and with hoggish  
whine

They burst my prayer. Yet this way was  
left,

And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with  
thorns;

Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be,  
fast

Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with  
slow steps,

With slow, faint steps, and much exceed-  
ing pain,

Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that  
still

Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the  
praise:

God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,  
Among the powers and princes of this  
world,

To make me an example to mankind,  
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say  
But that a time may come—yea, even now,  
Now, now, his footsteps smite the thresh-  
old stairs

Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
When you may worship me without re-  
proach;

For I will leave my relics in your land,  
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,  
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,  
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewd-  
est pain

Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike  
change,

In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the  
end!

Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a  
shade,

A flash of light. Is that the angel there  
That holds a crown? Come, blessed  
brother, come.

## ST. SIMEON STYLITES

I know thy glittering face. I waited long;  
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?  
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch  
it. Christ!

'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown! the  
crown!

So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
And from it melt the dew's of Paradise,  
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and  
frankincense.

Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints: I  
trust

That I am whole, and clean, and meet for  
Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,  
Among you there, and let him presently  
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
And climbing up into my airy home,  
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;  
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,  
Aid all this foolish people; let them take  
Example, pattern: lead them to thy light.

### THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls;  
Once more before my face  
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
Beneath its drift of smoke;  
And ah! with what delighted eyes  
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
Ere that, which in me burn'd,  
The love, that makes me thrice a man,  
Could hope itself return'd;

To yonder oak within the field  
I spoke without restraint,  
And with a larger faith appeal'd  
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
And told him of my choice,  
Until he plagiarised a heart,  
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven  
None else could understand;  
I found him garrulously given,  
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
Is many a weary hour;  
'Twere well to question him, and try  
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,  
Whose topmost branches can discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
If ever maid or spouse,  
As fair as my Olivia, came  
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
Whatever maiden grace  
The good old Summers, year by year  
Madc ripe in Sumner-chace:

'Old Summers, when the monk was fat,  
And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
And number'd bead, and shrift,  
Bluff Harry broke into the spence  
And turn'd the cows adrift:

'And I have seen some score of those  
Fresh faces, that would thrive  
When his man-minded offset rose  
To chase the deer at five;

'And all that from the town would stroll,  
Till that wild wind made work  
In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
Went by me, like a stork:

'The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
And others, passing praise,  
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
For puritanic stays:

'And I have shadow'd many a group  
Of beauties, that were born  
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn;

## THE TALKING OAK

'And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
About me leap'd and laugh'd  
The modish Cupid of the day,  
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

'I swear (and else may insects prick  
Each leaf into a gall)  
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
Is three times worth them all;

'For those and theirs, by Nature's law,  
Have faded long ago;  
But in these latter springs I saw  
Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gamboll'd on the greens  
A baby-germ, to when  
The maiden blossoms of her teens  
Could number five from ten.

'I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,  
(And hear me with thine ears,)   
That, tho' I circle in the grain  
Five hundred rings of years—

'Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass:

'For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.'

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace;  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft hast heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs.

'O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.

'And with him Albert came on his.  
I look'd at him with joy:  
As cowslip unto oxlip is,  
So seems she to the boy.

'An hour had past—and, sitting straight  
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays.

'But as for her, she stay'd at home,  
And on the roof she went,  
And down the way you use to come,  
She look'd with discontent.

'She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf;  
She left the new piano shut:  
She could not please herself.

'Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
And livelier than a lark  
She sent her voice thro' all the holt  
Before her, and the park.

'A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as might be would he cling  
About the darling child:

'But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir,  
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,  
And turn'd to look at her.

'And here she came, and round me play'd,  
And sang to me the whole  
Of those three stanzas that you made  
About my "giant bole;"

'And in a fit of frolic mirth  
She strove to span my waist:  
Alas, I was so broad of girth,  
I could not be embraced.

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech  
That here beside me stands,  
That round me, clasping each in each,  
She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet  
As woodbine's fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold.'

O muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Sumner-chace!  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place!

## THE TALKING OAK

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows  
When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs?

'O yes, she wander'd round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,  
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

'A teardrop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept.

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,  
She glanced across the plain;  
But not a creature was in sight:  
She kiss'd me once again.

'Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr'd:

'And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern'd,  
Like those blind motions of the Spring,  
That show the year is turn'd.

'Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm—  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden's tender palm.

'I, rooted here among the groves  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust:

'For ah! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,

'She had not found me so remiss;  
But lightly issuing thro',  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,  
With usury thereto.'

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers  
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well;  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell.

'Tis little more: the day was warm;  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm  
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Thro' all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

'I took the swarming sound of life—  
The music from the town—  
The murmurs of the drum and fife  
And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye;  
A second flutter'd round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly;

'A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ancle fine,

'Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadow'd all her rest—  
Dropt dews upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck'd it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.

'And yet it was a graceful gift—  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

'I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.  
He lies beside thee on the grass.  
O kiss him once for me.

## THE TALKING OAK

'O kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss,  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this.'

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
Look further thro' the chace,  
Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,  
That but a moment lay  
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,  
The warmth it thence shall win  
To riper life may magnetise  
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
Or lapse from hand to hand,  
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,  
Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
That art the fairest-spoken tree  
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery-top  
All throats that gurgle sweet!  
All starry culmination drop  
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow—  
And while he sinks or swells  
The full south-breeze around thee blow  
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
That under deeply strikes!  
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
But, rolling as in sleep,  
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
That only by thy side  
Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,  
She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
And praise thee more in both  
Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,  
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
And mystic sentence spoke;  
And more than England honours that,  
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
Till all the paths were dim,  
And far below the Roundhead rode,  
And humm'd a surly hymn.

## LOVE AND DUTY

Of love that never found his earthly close,  
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking  
hearts?

Or all the same as if he had not been?  
Not so. Shall Error in the round of time  
Still father Truth? O shall the braggart  
shout

For some blind glimpse of freedom work  
itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law  
System and empire? Sin itself be found  
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?  
And only he, this wonder, dead, become  
Mere highway dust? or year by year alone  
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of him-  
self?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,  
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,  
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless  
days,

The long mechanic paces to and fro,  
The set gray life, and apathetic end.  
But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?  
O three times less unworthy! likewise thou  
Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy  
years.

The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon  
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will  
bring

## LOVE AND DUTY

The drooping flower of knowledge changed  
to fruit

Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in  
Time,

And that which shapes it to some perfect  
end.

Will some one say, Then why not ill for  
good?

Why took ye not your pastime? To that  
man

My work shall answer, since I knew the  
right

And did it; for a man is not as God,  
But then most Godlike being most a man.

—So let me think 'tis well for thee and  
me—

Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart

so slow  
To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,

When eyes, love-languid thro' half-tears  
would dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,  
Then not to dare to see! when thy low

voice,  
Faltering, would break its syllables, to

keep  
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a

leash,  
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,

And on thy bosom (deep desired relief!)  
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that

weigh'd  
Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!

For Love himself took part against him-  
self

To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—  
O this world's curse,—beloved but hated—

came  
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and

mine,  
And crying, 'Who is this? behold thy

bride,  
She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard  
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—

No, not to thee, but to thyself in me:  
Hard is my doom and thine: thou knowest

it all.  
Could Love part thus? was it not well

to speak,

To have spoken once? It could not but be  
well.

The slow sweet hours that bring us all  
things good,

The slow sad hours that bring us all things  
ill,

And all good things from evil, brought the  
night

In which we sat together and alone,  
And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart,

Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,  
That burn'd upon its object thro' such

tears  
As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way  
To those caresses, when a hundred times

In that last kiss, which never was the last,  
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and

died.  
Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the

words  
That make a man feel strong in speaking

truth;  
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead

The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd  
In that brief night; the summer night, that

paused  
Among her stars to hear us; stars that

hung  
Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels of

Time  
Spun round in station, but the end had

come.  
O then like those, who clench their

nerves to rush  
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,

There—closing like an individual life—  
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,

Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,  
Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,

And bade adieu for ever.

Live—yet live—  
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing

all  
Life needs for life is possible to will—

Live happy; tend thy flowers; be tended by  
My blessing! Should my Shadow cross thy

thoughts  
Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou

For calmer hours to Memory's darkest  
hold,

## LOVE AND DUTY

If not to be forgotten—not at once—  
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy  
dreams,  
O might it come like one that looks content,  
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,  
And point thee forward to a distant light,  
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart  
And leave thee freer, till thou wake refreshed  
Then when the first low matin-chirp hath  
grown  
Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow  
of pearl  
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,  
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

### THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which  
Leonard wrote:  
It was last summer on a tour in Wales:  
Old James was with me: we that day had  
been  
Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leonard  
there,  
And found him in Llanberis: then we crost  
Between the lakes, and clamber'd half way  
up  
The counter side; and that same song of his  
He told me; for I banter'd him, and swore  
They said he lived shut up within himself,  
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,  
That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,  
Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech,  
'Give,  
Cram us with all,' but count not me the  
herd!  
To which 'They call me what they will,'  
he said:  
'But I was born too late: the fair new  
forms,  
That float about the threshold of an age,  
Like truths of Science waiting to be  
caught—  
Catch me who can, and make the catcher  
crown'd—  
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.  
But if you care indeed to listen, hear  
These measured words, my work of yesterday-morn.

'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all  
things move;  
The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun;  
The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her  
ellipse;  
And human things returning on themselves  
Move onward, leading up the golden year.  
'Ah, tho' the times, when some new  
thought can bud,  
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,  
Yet oceans daily gaining on the land,  
Have ebb and flow conditioning their  
march,  
And slow and sure comes up the golden  
year.  
'When wealth no more shall rest in  
mounded heaps,  
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt  
In many streams to fatten lower lands,  
And light shall spread, and man be liker  
man  
Thro' all the season of the golden year.  
'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be  
wrens?  
If all the world were falcons, what of that?  
The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
But he not less the eagle. Happy days  
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.  
'Fly, happy happy sails, and bear the  
Press;  
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;  
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward  
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of  
toll,  
Enrich the markets of the golden year.  
'But we grow old. Ah! when shall all  
men's good  
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace  
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,  
Thro' all the circle of the golden year?'  
Thus far he flow'd, and ended; where-  
upon  
'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence answer'd  
James—  
'Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,  
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,  
'Tis like the second world to us that live;  
'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on  
Heaven

## THE GOLDEN YEAR

As on this vision of the golden year.  
 With that he struck his staff against the  
 rocks  
 And broke it,—James,—you know him,—  
 old, but full  
 Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,  
 And like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
 O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis:  
 Then added, all in heat:

‘What stuff is this!’  
 Old writers push’d the happy season  
 back,—  
 The more fools they,—we forward:  
 dreamers both:  
 You most, that in an age, when every hour  
 Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,  
 Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman,  
 rapt  
 Upon the teeming harvest, should not  
 plunge  
 His hand into the bag: but well I know  
 That unto him who works, and feels he  
 works,  
 This same grand year is ever at the doors.’  
 He spoke; and, high above, I heard them  
 blast  
 The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo  
 flap  
 And buffet round the hills, from bluff to  
 bluff.

### ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,  
 By this still hearth, among these barren  
 crags,  
 Match’d with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know  
 not me.  
 I cannot rest from travel: I will drink  
 Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy’d  
 Greatly, have suffer’d greatly, both with  
 those  
 That loved me, and alone; on shore, and  
 when  
 Thro’ scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
 Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;  
 For always roaming with a hungry heart  
 Much have I seen and known; cities of  
 men

And manners, climates, councils, govern-  
 ments,  
 Myself not least, but honour’d of them all;  
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
 I am a part of all that I have met;  
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro’  
 Gleams that untravell’d world, whose  
 margin fades

For ever and for ever when I move.  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
 To rust unburnish’d, not to shine in use!  
 As tho’ to breathe were life. Life piled on  
 life  
 Were all too little, and of one to me  
 Little remains: but every hour is saved  
 From that eternal silence, something more,  
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard  
 myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
 Beyond the utmost bound of human  
 thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
 This labour, by slow prudence to make  
 mild

A rugged people, and thro’ soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work, I  
 mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her  
 sail:

There gloom the dark broad seas. My  
 mariners,  
 Souls that have toil’d, and wrought, and  
 thought with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and  
 opposed

Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are  
 old;

Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;  
 Death closes all: but something ere the end,  
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,



## ULYSSES

Not unbecoming men that strove with  
Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:  
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs:  
the deep

Moans round with many voices. Come,  
my friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose  
holds

To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and  
tho'

We are not now that strength which in old  
days

Moved earth and heaven; that which we  
are, we are;

One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in  
will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

## TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay and  
fall,

The vapours weep their burthen to the  
ground,

Man comes and tills the field and lies  
beneath,

And after many a summer dies the swan.

Me only cruel immortality

Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,  
Here at the quiet limit of the world,

A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a  
dream

The ever-silent spaces of the East,  
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of  
morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—  
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
Who madest him thy chosen, that he  
seem'd

To his great heart none other than a God!  
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'

Then didst thou grant mine asking with a  
smile,

Like wealthy men who care not how they  
give.

But thy strong Hours indignant work'd  
their wills,

And beat me down and marr'd and wasted  
me,

And tho' they could not end me, left me  
maim'd

To dwell in presence of immortal youth,  
Immortal age beside immortal youth,

And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,  
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with  
tears

To hear me? Let me go: take back thy  
gift:

Why should a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of men,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
Where all should pause, as is most meet  
for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there  
comes

A glimpse of that dark world where I was  
born.

Once more the old mysterious glimmer  
steals

From thy pure brows, and from thy  
shoulders pure,

And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.  
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the  
gloom,

Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to  
mine,

Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild  
team

Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke,  
arise,

And shake the darkness from their loosen'd  
manes,

And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
In silence, then before thine answer  
given

Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

## TITHONUS

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy  
tears,  
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,  
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?  
‘The Gods themselves cannot recall their  
gifts.’

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart  
In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
I used to watch—if I be he that watch’d—  
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw  
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;  
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt  
my blood  
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson’d  
all  
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,  
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-  
warm  
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds  
Of April, and could hear the lips that  
kiss’d

Whispering I knew not what of wild and  
sweet,  
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,  
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:  
How can my nature longer mix with thine?  
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet  
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the  
steam  
Floats up from those dim fields about the  
homes  
Of happy men that have the power to die,  
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.  
Release me, and restore me to the ground;  
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my  
grave:  
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by  
morn;  
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

## LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet ’tis early morn:  
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

’Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,  
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,  
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro’ the mellow shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander’d, nourishing a youth sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;  
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed:

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see;  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.—

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin’s breast;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish’d dove;  
In the Spring a young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

## LOCKSLEY HALL

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,  
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong;'  
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping, 'I have loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!  
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known me—to decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is: thou art mated with a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are glazed with wine.  
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought:  
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—  
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,  
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

## LOCKSLEY HALL

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!  
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!  
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy proved—  
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?  
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come  
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?  
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd: sweetly did she speak and move:  
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?  
No—she never loved me truly: love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,  
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,  
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,  
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the phantom years,  
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.  
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow: get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.  
'Tis a purer life than thine; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival brings thee rest.  
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.  
Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,  
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt—  
Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy self-contempt!

## LOCKSLEY HALL

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore should I care?  
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?  
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.  
I have but an angry fancy: what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,  
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honour feels,  
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.  
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,  
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield  
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,  
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,  
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men:

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:  
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew  
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,  
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint:  
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point:

## LOCKSLEY HALL.

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, <sup>but</sup> wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain:

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd;—  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,  
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,  
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing space;  
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

## LOCKSLEY HALL

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,  
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun:  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!  
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

## GODIVA

*I WAITED for the train at Coventry;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires; and there I  
shaped*

*The city's ancient legend into this:—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the  
people well,

And loathed to see them overtax'd; but she  
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Coventry: for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought  
Their children, clamouring, 'If we pay, we  
starve!'

She sought her lord, and found him, where  
he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair  
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,  
And pray'd him, 'If they pay this tax, they  
starve.'

Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,  
'You would not let your little finger ache  
For such as *these*?—'But I would die,'  
said she.

He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by  
Paul:

Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear;  
'Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk!—'Alas!' she said,  
'But prove me what it is I would not do.'  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,  
He answer'd, 'Ride you naked thro' the  
town,

And I repeal it;' and nodding, as in scorn,

## GODIVA

He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,  
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,

Made war upon each other for an hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet,  
all

The hard condition; but that she would loose

The people: therefore, as they loved her well,

From then till noon no foot should pace the street,

No eye look down, she passing; but that all  
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there

Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon  
Half-dipt in cloud: anon she shook her head,

And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee;

Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair  
Stole on; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid  
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd  
The gateway; there she found her palfrey  
trapt

In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity:

The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.

The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout

Had cunning eyes to see: the barking cur  
Made her cheek flame: her palfrey's foot-fall shot

Light horrors thro' her pulses: the blind walls

Were full of chinks and holes; and overhead

Fantastic gables, crowding, stared: but she  
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw  
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field

Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity

And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,

The fatal byword of all years to come,  
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will,

Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,  
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait

On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense mis-used;

And she, that knew not, pass'd: and all at once,

With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon

Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,

One after one: but even then she gain'd  
Her bower; whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,

To meet her lord, she took the tax away  
And built herself an everlasting name.

## THE DAY-DREAM

### PROLOGUE

O LADY FLORA, let me speak:

A pleasant hour has passed away  
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.

As by the lattice you reclined,

I went thro' many wayward moods

To see you dreaming—and, behind,

A summer crisp with shining woods.

And I too dream'd, until at last

Across my fancy, brooding warm,

The reflex of a legend past,

And loosely settled into form.

And would you have the thought I had,

And see the vision that I saw,

Then take the broodery-frame, and add

A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it. Turn your face,

Nor look with that too-earnest eye—

The rhymes are dazzled from their place  
And order'd words asunder fly.



## THE DAY-DREAM

### THE SLEEPING PALACE

#### I

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,  
Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
Here stays the blood along the veins.  
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,  
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
Like hints and echoes of the world  
To spirits folded in the womb.

#### II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
On every slanting terrace-lawn.  
The fountain to his place returns  
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
Here droops the banner on the tower,  
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
The peacock in his laurel bower,  
The parrot in his gilded wires.

#### III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs:  
In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
The mantles from the golden pegs  
Droop sleepily: no sound is made,  
Not even of a gnat that sings.  
More like a picture seemeth all  
Than those old portraits of old kings,  
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

#### IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drain'd; and  
there  
The wrinkled steward at his task,  
The maid-of-honour blooming fair;  
The page has caught her hand in his:  
Her lips are sever'd as to speak:  
His own are pouted to a kiss:  
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

#### V

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,  
Make prisms in every carven glass,  
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.  
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
His state the king reposing keeps.  
He must have been a jovial king.

#### VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
At distance like a little wood;  
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
And grapes with bunches red as blood;  
All creeping plants, a wall of green  
Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,  
And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
High up, the topmost palace spire.

#### VII

When will the hundred summers die,  
And thought and time be born again,  
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
Bring truth that sways the soul of men?  
Here all things in their place remain,  
As all were order'd, ages since.  
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

### THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

#### I

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purple coverlet,  
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,  
On either side her tranced form  
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:  
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
And moves not on the rounded curl.

#### II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
Languidly ever; and, amid  
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,  
Gloweth forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
With bracelets of the diamond bright:  
Her constant beauty doth inform  
Stillness with love, and day with light.

#### III

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard  
In palace chambers far apart.  
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
That lie upon her charmed heart.  
She sleeps: on either hand upswells  
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:  
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
A perfect form in perfect rest.

## THE DAY-DREAM

### THE ARRIVAL

#### I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
To those that seek them issue forth;  
For love in sequel works with fate,  
And draws the veil from hidden worth.  
He travels far from other skies—  
His mantle glitters on the rocks—  
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
And lighter-footed than the fox.

#### II

The bodies and the bones of those  
That strove in other days to pass,  
Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
He gazes on the silent dead:  
'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'  
This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
'The many fail: the one succeeds.'

#### III

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:  
He breaks the hedge: he enters there:  
The colour flies into his cheeks:  
He trusts to light on something fair;  
For all his life the charm did talk  
About his path, and hover near  
With words of promise in his walk,  
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

#### IV

More close and close his footsteps wind:  
The Magic Music in his heart  
Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
The quiet chamber far apart.  
His spirit flutters like a lark,  
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.  
'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
How dark those hidden eyes must be!'

### THE REVIVAL

#### I

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was snapt.  
There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;  
A fuller light illumined all,  
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

#### II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,  
The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
The parrot scream'd, the peacock  
squall'd,  
The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and  
clackt,  
And all the long-pent stream of life  
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

#### III

And last with these the king awoke,  
And in his chair himself uprear'd,  
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and  
spoke,  
'By holy rood, a royal beard!  
How say you? we have slept, my lords.  
My beard has grown into my lap.'  
The barons swore, with many words,  
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

#### IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still  
My joints are somewhat stiff or so.  
My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
I mention'd half an hour ago?'  
The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
In courteous words return'd reply:  
But dallied with his golden chain,  
And, smiling, put the question by.

### THE DEPARTURE

#### I

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
And round her waist she felt it fold,  
And far across the hills they went  
In that new world which is the old:  
Across the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
And deep into the dying day  
The happy princess follow'd him.

#### II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,  
O love, for such another kiss;'  
'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,  
'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'

## THE DAY-DREAM

And o'er them many a sliding star,  
And many a merry wind was borne,  
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
The twilight melted into morn.

### III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!  
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!  
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!  
'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!  
And o'er them many a flowing range  
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dark.

### IV

'A hundred summers! can it be?  
And whither goest thou, tell me where?'  
'O seek my father's court with me,  
For there are greater wonders there.'  
And o'er the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

### MORAL

#### I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And if you find no moral there,  
Go, look in any glass and say,  
What moral is in being fair.  
Oh, to what uses shall we put  
The wildweed-flower that simply blows?  
And is there any moral shut  
Within the bosom of the rose?

#### II

But any man that walks the mead,  
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,  
According as his humours lead,  
A meaning suited to his mind.  
And liberal applications lie  
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;  
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
Should hook it to some useful end.

### L'ENVOI

#### I

You shake your head. A random string  
Your finer female sense offends.  
Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
To fall asleep with all one's friends;

To pass with all our social ties:  
To silence from the paths of men;  
And every hundred years to rise  
And learn the world, and sleep again;  
To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
And wake on science grown to more,  
On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
As wild as aught of fairy lore;  
And all that else the years will show,  
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
The vast Republics that may grow,  
The Federations and the Powers;  
Titanic forces taking birth  
In divers seasons, divers climes;  
For we are Ancients of the earth,  
And in the morning of the times.

#### II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
Thro' sunny decades new and strange,  
Or gay quinquennials would we reap  
The flower and quintessence of change.

#### III

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!  
So much your eyes my fancy take—  
Be still the first to leap to light  
That I might kiss those eyes awake!  
For, am I right, or am I wrong,  
To choose your own you did not care;  
You'd have my moral from the song,  
And I will take my pleasure there:  
And, am I right or am I wrong,  
My tancy, ranging thro' and thro',  
To search a meaning for the song,  
Perforce will still revert to you;  
Nor finds a closer truth than this  
All-graceful head, so richly cul'd,  
And evermore a costly kiss  
The prelude to some brighter world.

#### IV

For since the time when Adam first  
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
And every bird of Eden burst  
In carol, every bud to flower  
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd  
hopes,  
What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd?  
Where on the double rosebud droops  
The fulness of the pensive mind;

## THE DAY-DREAM

Which all too dearly self-involved,  
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;  
A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
That lets thee neither hear nor see:  
But break it. In the name of wife,  
And in the rights that name may give,  
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
And that for which I care to live.

### EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And, if you find a meaning there,  
O whisper to your glass, and say,  
'What wonder, if he thinks me fair?'  
What wonder I was all unwise,  
To shape the song for your delight  
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise  
That float thro' Heaven, and cannot  
light?  
Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
And either sacred unto you.

### AMPHION

My father left a park to me,  
But it is wild and barren,  
A garden too with scarce a tree,  
And waster than a warren:  
Yet say the neighbours when they call,  
It is not bad but good land,  
And in it is the germ of all  
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great  
In days of old Amphion,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
Nor cared for seed or scion!  
And had I lived when song was great,  
And legs of trees were limber,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
And fiddled in the timber!

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,  
Such happy intonation,  
Wherever he sat down and sung  
He left a small plantation;  
Wherever in a lonely grove  
He set up his forlorn pipes,  
The gouty oak began to move,  
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,  
And, as tradition teaches,  
Young ashes pirouetted down  
Coquetting with young beeches;  
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
Ran forward to his rhyming,  
And from the valleys underneath  
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
And down the middle, buzz! she went  
With all her bees behind her:  
The poplars, in long order due,  
With cypress promenaded,  
The shock-head willows two and two  
By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,  
Came yews, a dismal coterie;  
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,  
Poussetting with a sloe-tree:  
Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
The vine stream'd out to follow,  
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,  
When, ere his song was ended,  
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
The country-side descended;  
And shepherds from the mountain-caves  
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-fright-  
en'd,  
As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
The random sunshine lighten'd!

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,  
And wanton without measure;  
So youthful and so flexible then,  
You moved her at your pleasure.  
Twang out, my fiddle! shake the twigs!  
And make her dance attendance;  
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,  
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain! in such a brassy age  
I could not move a thistle;  
The very sparrows in the hedge  
Scarce answer to my whistle;

## AMPHION

Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
With strumming and with scraping,  
A jackass heehaws from the rick,  
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound  
Like sleepy counsel pleading;  
O Lord!—'tis in my neighbour's ground,  
The modern Muses reading.  
They read Botanic Treatises,  
And Works on Gardening thro' there,  
And Methods of transplanting trees  
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses! how they prose  
O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
And show you slips of all that grows  
From England to Van Diemen.  
They read in arbours clipt and cut,  
And alleys, faded places,  
By squares of tropic summer shut  
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
Are neither green nor sappy;  
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
The spindlings look unhappy.  
Better to me the meanest weed  
That blows upon its mountain,  
The vilest herb that runs to seed  
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,  
And years of cultivation,  
Upon my proper patch of soil  
To grow my own plantation.  
I'll take the showers as they fall,  
I will not vex my bosom:  
Enough if at the end of all  
A little garden blossom.

### ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
Are sparkling to the moon:  
My breath to heaven like vapour goes:  
May my soul follow soon!  
The shadows of the convent-towers  
Slant down the snowy sward,  
Still creeping with the creeping hours  
That lead me to my Lord:

Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
As are the frosty skies,  
Or this first snowdrop of the year  
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,  
To yonder shining ground;  
As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
To yonder argent round;  
So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
My spirit before Thee;  
So in mine earthly house I am,  
To that I hope to be.  
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,  
Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;  
The flashes come and go;  
All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
And strows her-lights below,  
And deepens on and up! the gates  
Roll back, and far within  
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
To make me pure of sin.  
The sabbaths of Eternity,  
One sabbath deep and wide—  
A light upon the shining sea—  
The Bridegroom with his bride!

### SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
My strength is as the strength of ten,  
Because my heart is pure.  
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
The horse and rider reel:  
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
And when the tide of combat stands,  
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
On whom their favours fall!  
For them I battle till the end,  
To save from shame and thrall:  
But all my heart is drawn above,  
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine:

## SIR GALAHAD

I never felt the kiss of love,  
Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
Me mightier transports move and thrill;  
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy ascent goes,  
A light before me swims,  
Between dark stems the forest glows,  
I hear a noise of hymns:  
Then by some secret shrine I ride;  
I hear a voice but none are there;  
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
The tapers burning fair.  
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
I find a magic bark;  
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:  
I float till all is dark.  
A gentle sound, an awful light!  
Three angels bear the holy Grail:  
With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail.  
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!  
My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
As down dark tides the glory slides,  
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
Thro' dreaming towns I go,  
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
The streets are dumb with snow.  
The tempest crackles on the leads,  
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;  
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
And gilds the driving hail.  
I leave the plain, I climb the height;  
No branchy thicket shelter yields;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear;  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here.

I muse on joy that will not cease,  
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
Whose odours haunt my dreams;  
And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
This mortal armour that I wear,  
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,  
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And thro' the mountain-walls  
A rolling organ-harmony  
Swells up, and shakes and falls.  
Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:  
'O just and faithful knight of God!  
Ride on! the prize is near.'  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;  
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail.

## EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town  
Met me walking on yonder way,  
'And have you lost your heart?' she said;  
'And are you married yet, Edward  
Gray?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:  
'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's will:  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold;  
Thought her proud, and fled over the  
sea;

Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said!  
Cruelly came they back to-day:  
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,  
'To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.'

'There I put my face in the grass—  
Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair:  
I repent me of all I did:  
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!"

## EDWARD GRAY

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
"Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;  
And here the heart of Edward Gray!"

'Love may come, and love may go,  
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree;  
But I will love no more, no more,  
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone:  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:  
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!  
And there the heart of Edward Gray!"

### WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,  
To which I most resort,  
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.  
Go fetch a pint of port:  
But let it not be such as that  
You set before chance-comers,  
But such whose father-grape grew fat  
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
But may she still be kind,  
And whisper lovely words, and use  
Her influence on the mind,  
To make me write my random rhymes,  
Ere they be half-forgotten;  
Nor add and alter, many times,  
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
Her laurel in the wine,  
And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
These favour'd lips of mine;  
Until the charm have power to make  
New lifeblood warm the bosom,  
And barren commonplaces break  
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;  
Her gradual fingers steal  
And touch upon the master-chord  
Of all I felt and feel.  
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
And phantom hopes assemble;  
And that child's heart within the man's  
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,  
By many pleasant ways,  
Against its fountain upward runs  
The current of my days:  
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;  
The gas-light wavers dimmer;  
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,  
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,  
Unboding critic-pen,  
Or that eternal want of pence,  
Which vexes public men,  
Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
For that which all deny them—  
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,  
Tho' fortune clip my wings,  
I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
Half-views of men and things.  
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;  
There must be stormy weather;  
But for some true result of good  
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;  
If old things, there are new;  
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
Yet glimpses of the true.  
Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
As on this whirligig of Time  
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid;  
With fair horizons bound:  
This whole wide earth of light and shade  
Comes out a perfect round.  
High over roaring Temple-bar,  
And set in Heaven's third story,  
I look at all things as they are,  
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest  
Half-mused, or reeling ripe,  
The pint, you brought me, was the best  
That ever came from pipe.  
But tho' the port surpasses praise,  
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
Is there some magic in the place?  
Or do my peptics differ?

## WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

For since I came to live and learn,  
 No pint of white or red  
 Had ever half the power to turn  
 This wheel within my head,  
 Which bears a season'd brain about,  
 Unsubject to confusion,  
 Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,  
 Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
 With many kinsmen gay,  
 Where long and largely we carouse  
 As who shall say me nay:  
 Each month, a birth-day coming on,  
 We drink defying trouble,  
 Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
 And then we drank it double;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
 Had relish fiery-new,  
 Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,  
 As old as Waterloo;  
 Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,  
 In musty bins and chambers,  
 Had cast upon its crusty side  
 The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is!  
 She answer'd to my call,  
 She changes with that mood or this,  
 Is all-in-all to all:  
 She lit the spark within my throat,  
 To make my blood run quicker,  
 Used all her fiery will, and smote  
 Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
 The waiter's hands, that reach  
 To each his perfect pint of stout,  
 His proper chop to each.  
 He looks not like the common breed  
 That with the napkin dally;  
 I think he came like Ganymede,  
 From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg  
 Than modern poultry drop,  
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
 And cramm'd a plumper crop;  
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
 Crow'd lustier late and early,  
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
 And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,  
 Till in a court he saw  
 A something-pottle-bodied boy  
 That knuckled at the taw:  
 He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,  
 Flew over roof and casement:  
 His brothers of the weather stood  
 Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,  
 And follow'd with acclaims,  
 A sign to many a staring shire  
 Came crowing over Thames.  
 Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
 Till, where the street grows straiter,  
 One fix'd for ever at the door,  
 And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go?  
 How out of place she makes  
 The violet of a legend blow  
 Among the chops and steaks!  
 'Tis but a steward of the can,  
 One shade more plump than common;  
 As just and mere a serving-man  
 As any born of woman.

I ranged too high: what draws me down  
 Into the common day?  
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,  
 Which I shall have to pay?  
 For, something duller than at first,  
 Nor wholly comfortable,  
 I sit, my empty glass reversed,  
 And thrumming on the table:

Half fearful that, with self at strife,  
 I take myself to task;  
 Lest of the fulness of my life  
 I leave an empty flask:  
 For I had hope, by something rare  
 To prove myself a poet:  
 But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,  
 Till they be gather'd up;  
 The truth, that flies the flowing can,  
 Will haunt the vacant cup:  
 And others' follies teach us not,  
 Nor much their wisdom teaches;  
 And most, of sterling worth, is what  
 Our own experience preaches.



## WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!  
 We know not what we know.  
 But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone;  
 'Tis gone, and let it go.  
 'Tis gone: a thousand such have slept  
 Away from my embraces,  
 And fall'n into the dusty crypt  
 Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went  
 Long since, and came no more;  
 With peals of genial clamour sent  
 From many a tavern-door,  
 With twisted quirks and happy hits,  
 From misty men of letters;  
 The tavern-hours of mighty wits—  
 Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks  
 Had yet their native glow:  
 Nor yet the fear of little books  
 Had made him talk for show;  
 But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
 He flash'd his random speeches,  
 Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd  
 His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,  
 Like all good things on earth!  
 For should I prize thee, couldst thou last  
 At half thy real worth?  
 I hold it good, good things should pass:  
 With time I will not quarrel:  
 It is but yonder empty glass  
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
 To which I most resort,  
 I too must part: I hold thee dear  
 For this good pint of port.  
 For this, thou shalt from all things suck  
 Marrow of mirth and laughter;  
 And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,  
 The sphere thy fate allots:  
 Thy latter days increased with pence  
 Go down among the pots:  
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
 In haunts of hungry sinners,  
 Old boxes, larded with the steam  
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,  
 Would quarrel with our lot;  
 Thy care is, under polish'd tins,  
 To serve the hot-and-hot;  
 To come and go, and come again,  
 Returning like the pewit,  
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
 The thick-set hazel dies;  
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread  
 The corners of thine eyes:  
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
 Our changeful equinoxes,  
 Till mellow Death, like some late guest,  
 Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease  
 To pace the gritted floor,  
 And, laying down an unctuous lease  
 Of life, shalt earn no more;  
 No carved cross-bones, the types of Death  
 Shall show thee past to Heaven:  
 But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,  
 A pint-pot neatly graven.

### LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,  
 And clouds are highest up in air,  
 Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
 To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:  
 Lovers long-betroth'd were they:  
 They two will wed the morrow morn:  
 God's blessing on the day!

'He does not love me for my birth,  
 Nor for my lands so broad and fair;  
 He loves me for my own true worth,  
 And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
 Said, 'Who was this that went from  
 thee?'

'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare,  
 'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O God be thank'd!' said Alice the nurse,  
 'That all comes round so just and fair:  
 Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
 And you are *not* the Lady Clare.'

## LADY CLARE

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?'  
 Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so wild?'  
 'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,  
 'I speak the truth: ye are my child.

'The old Earl's daughter died at my breast;  
 I speak the truth, as I live by bread!  
 I buried her like my own sweet child,  
 And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
 O mother,' she said, 'if this be true,  
 To keep the best man under the sun  
 So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,  
 'But keep the secret for your life,  
 And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,  
 When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,  
 'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.  
 Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,  
 And fling the diamond necklace by.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,  
 'But keep the secret all ye can.'  
 She said, 'Not so: but I will know  
 If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice the nurse,  
 'The man will cleave unto his right.'  
 'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,  
 'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!  
 Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee.'  
 'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,  
 'So strange it seems to me.'

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,  
 My mother dear, if this be so,  
 And lay your hand upon my head,  
 And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
 She was no longer Lady Clare:  
 She went by dale, and she went by down,  
 With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had  
 brought  
 Leapt up from where she lay,

Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,  
 And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:  
 'O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!  
 Why come you drest like a village maid  
 That are the flower of the earth?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,  
 I am but as my fortunes are:  
 I am a beggar born,' she said,  
 'And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
 'For I am yours in word and in deed.  
 Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
 'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O and proudly stood she up!  
 Her heart within her did not fail:  
 She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,  
 And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn:  
 He turn'd and kiss'd her where she  
 stood:

'If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I,' said he, 'the next in blood—

'If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,  
 We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
 And you shall still be Lady Clare.'

## THE CAPTAIN

### A LEGEND OF THE NAVY

HE that only rules by terror  
 Doeth grisious wrong.  
 Deep as Hell I count his error.  
 Let him hear my song.  
 Brave the Captain was: the seamen  
 Made a gallant crew,  
 Gallant sons of English freemen,  
 Sailors bold and true.  
 But they hated his oppression,  
 Stern he was and rash;  
 So for every light transgression  
 Doom'd them to the lash.  
 Day by day more harsh and cruel  
 Seem'd the Captain's mood.  
 Secret wrath like smother'd fuel  
 Burnt in each man's blood.

## THE CAPTAIN

Yet he hoped to purchase glory,  
Hoped to make the name  
Of his vessel great in story,  
Wheresoe'er he came.  
So they past by capes and islands,  
Many a harbour-mouth,  
Sailing under palmy highlands  
Far within the South.  
On a day when they were going  
O'er the lone expanse,  
In the north, her canvas flowing,  
Rose a ship of France.  
Then the Captain's colour heighten'd,  
Joyful came his speech:  
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd  
In the eyes of each.  
'Chase,' he said: the ship flew forward,  
And the wind did blow;  
Stately, lightly, went she Norward,  
Till she near'd the foe.  
Then they look'd at him they hated,  
Had what they desired:  
Mute with folded arms they waited—  
Not a gun was fired.  
But they heard the foeman's thunder  
Roaring out their doom;  
All the air was torn in sunder,  
Crashing went the boom,  
Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,  
Bullets fell like rain;  
Over mast and deck were scatter'd  
Blood and brains of men.  
Spars were splinter'd; decks were broken:  
Every mother's son—  
Down they dropt—no word was spoken—  
Each beside his gun.  
On the decks as they were lying,  
Were their faces grim.  
In their blood, as they lay dying,  
Did they smile on him.  
Those, in whom he had reliance  
For his noble name,  
With one smile of still defiance  
Sold him unto shame.  
Shame and wrath his heart confounded,  
Pale he turn'd and red,  
Till himself was deadly wounded  
Falling on the dead.  
Dismal error! fearful slaughter!  
Years have wander'd by,  
Side by side beneath the water

Crew and Captain lie;  
There the sunlit ocean tosses  
O'er them mouldering,  
And the lonely seabird crosses  
With one waft of the wing.

## THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

In her ear he whispers gaily,  
'If my heart by signs can tell,  
Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,  
And I think thou lov'st me well.'  
She replies, in accents fainter,  
'There is none I love like thee.'  
He is but a landscape-painter,  
And a village maiden she.  
He to lips, that fondly falter,  
Presses his without reproof:  
Leads her to the village altar,  
And they leave her father's roof.  
'I can make no marriage present:  
Little can I give my wife.  
Love will make our cottage pleasant,  
And I love thee more than life.'  
They by parks and lodges going  
See the lordly castles stand:  
Summer woods, about them blowing,  
Made a murmur in the land.  
From deep thought himself he rouses,  
Says to her that loves him well,  
'Let us see these handsome houses  
Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'  
So she goes by him attended,  
Hears him lovingly converse,  
Sees whatever fair and splendid  
Lay betwixt his home and hers;  
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
Parks and order'd gardens great,  
Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
Built for pleasure and for state.  
All he shows her makes him dearer:  
Evermore she seems to gaze  
On that cottage growing nearer,  
Where they twain will spend their days  
O but she will love him truly!  
He shall have a cheerful home;  
She will order all things duly,  
When beneath his roof they come.  
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
Till a gateway she discerns  
With armorial bearings stately,

## THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

And beneath the gate she turns;  
Sees a mansion more majestic  
Than all those she saw before:  
Many a gallant gay domestic  
Bows before him at the door.  
And they speak in gentle murmur,  
When they answer to his call,  
While he treads with footstep firmer,  
Leading on from hall to hall.  
And, while now she wonders blindly,  
Nor the meaning can divine,  
Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
'All of this is mine and thine.'  
Here he lives in state and bounty,  
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,  
Not a lord in all the county  
Is so great a lord as he.  
All at once the colour flushes  
Her sweet face from brow to chin:  
As it were with shame she blushes,  
And her spirit changed within.  
Then her countenance all over  
Pale again as death did prove:  
But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
And he cheer'd her soul with love.  
So she strove against her weakness,  
Tho' at times her spirit sank:  
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness  
To all duties of her rank:  
And a gentle consort made he,  
And her gentle mind was such  
That she grew a noble lady,  
And the people loved her much.  
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
With the burthen of an honour  
Unto which she was not born.  
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
And she murmur'd, 'Oh, that he  
Were once more that landscape-painter  
Which did win my heart from me!'  
So she droop'd and droop'd before him,  
Fading slowly from his side:  
Three fair children first she bore him,  
Then before her time she died.  
Weeping, weeping late and early,  
Walking up and pacing down,  
Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,  
Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.  
And he came to look upon her,  
And he look'd at her and said,

'Bring the dress and put it on her,  
That she wore when she was wed.'  
Then her people, softly treading,  
Bore to earth her body, drest  
In the dress that she was wed in,  
That her spirit might have rest.

## THE VOYAGE

### I

We left behind the painted buoy  
That tosses at the harbour-mouth;  
And madly danced our hearts with joy,  
As fast we fled to the South:  
How fresh was every sight and sound  
On open main or winding shore!  
We knew the merry world was round,  
And we might sail for evermore.

### II

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,  
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail:  
The Lady's-head upon the prow  
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the  
gale.  
The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,  
And swept behind; so quick the run,  
We felt the good ship shake and reel,  
We seem'd to sail into the Sun!

### III

How oft we saw the Sun retire,  
And burn the threshold of the night,  
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light!  
How oft the purple-skirted robe  
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
As thro' the slumber of the globe  
Again we dash'd into the dawn!

### IV

New stars all night above the brim  
Of waters lighten'd into view;  
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
Changed every moment as we flew.  
Far ran the naked moon across  
The houseless ocean's heaving field,  
Or flying shone, the silver boss  
Of her own halo's dusky shield;

## THE VOYAGE

### V

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
High towns on hills were dimly seen,  
We past long lines of Northern capes  
And dewy Northern meadows green.  
We came to warmer waves, and deep  
Across the boundless east we drove,  
Where those long swells of breaker sweep  
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

### VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering  
brine  
With ashy rains, that spreading made  
Fantastic plume or sable pine;  
By sands and steaming flats, and floods  
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,  
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

### VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark!  
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times  
With wakes of fire we tore the dark;  
At times a carven craft would shoot  
From havens hid in fairy bowers,  
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,  
But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

### VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled  
Down the waste waters day and night,  
And still we follow'd where she led,  
In hope to gain upon her flight.  
Her face was evermore unseen,  
And fixt upon the far sea-line;  
But each man murmur'd, 'O my Queen,  
I follow till I make thee mine.'

### IX

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
Like Fancy made of golden air,  
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,  
Now high on waves that idly burst  
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the  
sea,  
And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
She bore the blade of Liberty.

### X

And only one among us—him  
We pleased not—he was seldom pleased:  
He saw not far: his eyes were dim:  
But ours he swore were all diseased.  
'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,  
'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and wept.  
And overboard one stormy night  
He cast his body, and on we swept.

### XI

And never sail of ours was furl'd,  
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn;  
We lov'd the glories of the world,  
But laws of nature were our scorn.  
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,  
But whence were those that drove the  
sail  
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,  
And to and thro' the counter gale?

### XII

Again to colder climes we came,  
For still we follow'd where she led:  
Now mate is blind and captain lame,  
And half the crew are sick or dead,  
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,  
We follow that which flies before:  
We know the merry world is round,  
And we may sail for evermore.

## SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

### A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
With tears and smiles from heaven again  
The maiden Spring upon the plain  
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.  
In crystal vapour everywhere  
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,  
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,  
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green  
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:  
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:  
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,  
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong:

## SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

By grassy capes with fuller sound  
In curves the yellowing river ran,  
And drooping chestnut-buds began  
To spread into the perfect fan,  
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
Rode thro' the covert of the deer,  
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring  
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
Buckled with golden clasps before;  
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
Now by some tinkling rivulet,  
In mosses mixt with violet  
Her cream-white mule his pastern set:  
And fleetly now she skimm'd the plains  
Than she whose elfin prancer springs  
By night to eery warblings,  
When all the glimmering moorland rings  
With jingling bridle-reins.

As fast she fled thro' sun and shade,  
The happy winds upon her play'd,  
Blowing the ringlet from the braid:  
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd  
The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
A man had given all other bliss,  
And all his worldly worth for this,  
To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
Upon her perfect lips.

### A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
Thy tribute wave deliver:  
No more by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
A rivulet then a river:  
No where by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,  
And here thine aspen shiver;  
And here by thee will hum the bee,  
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
A thousand moons will quiver;  
But not by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

### THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid;  
She was more fair than words can say:  
Bare-footed came the beggar maid  
Before the king Cophetua.  
In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
To meet and greet her on her way;  
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,  
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
She in her poor attire was seen:  
One praised her ancles, one her eyes,  
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.  
So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
In all that land had never been:  
Cophetua sware a royal oath:  
'This beggar maid shall be my queen!'

### THE EAGLE

#### FRAGMENT

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave  
Yon orange sunset waning slow:  
From fringes of the faded eve,  
O, happy planet, eastward go;  
Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
To glass herself in dewy eyes  
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
Dip forward under starry light,  
And move me to my marriage-morn,  
And round again to happy night.

## 'COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD'

COME not, when I am dead,  
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,  
To trample round my fallen head,  
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst  
not save.

There let the wind sweep and the plover  
cry;

But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime

I care no longer, being all unblest:

Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of  
Time,

And I desire to rest.

Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where  
I lie:

Go by, go by.

## THE LETTERS

### I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,  
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,  
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
And saw the altar cold and bare.  
A clog of lead was round my feet,  
A band of pain across my brow;  
'Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet  
Before you hear my marriage vow.'

### II

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song  
That mock'd the wholesome human  
heart,

And then we met in wrath and wrong,  
We met, but only meant to part.  
Full cold my greeting was and dry;  
She faintly smiled, she hardly moved;  
I saw with half-unconscious eye  
She wore the colours I approved.

### III

She took the little ivory chest,  
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,  
Then raised her head with lips comprest,  
And gave my letters back to me.  
And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
My gifts, when gifts of mine could  
please;  
As looks a father on the things  
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

### IV

She told me all her friends had said;  
I raged against the public liar;  
She talk'd as if her love were dead,  
But in my words were seeds of fire.  
'No more of love; your sex is known:  
I never will be twice deceived.  
Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
The woman cannot be believed.'

### V

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell—  
And women's slander is the worst,  
And you, whom once I lov'd so well,  
Thro' you, my life will be accurst.'  
I spoke with heart, and heat and force,  
I shook her breast with vague alarms—  
Like torrents from a mountain source  
We rush'd into each other's arms.

### VI

We parted: sweetly gleam'd the stars,  
And sweet the vapour-braided blue,  
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
As homeward by the church I drew.  
The very graves appear'd to smile,  
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells  
'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,  
There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

## THE VISION OF SIN

### I

I HAD a vision when the night was late:  
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.  
He rode a horse with wings, that would  
have flown,  
But that his heavy rider kept him down.  
And from the palace came a child of sin,  
And took him by the curls, and led him in,  
Where sat a company with heated eyes,  
Expecting when a fountain should arise:  
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—  
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,  
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and  
capes—  
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid  
shapes,  
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and  
piles of grapes.

## THE VISION OF SIN

### II

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,  
Gathering up from all the lower ground;  
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled  
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,  
Wov'n in circles: they that heard it sigh'd,  
Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,  
Swung themselves, and in low tones re-  
plied;

Till the fountain spouted, showering wide  
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail;  
Then the music touch'd the gates and died;  
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,  
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale;  
Till thronging in and in, to where they  
waited,

As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,  
The strong tempestuous treble throb'd  
and palpitated;

Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,  
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,  
Flung the torrent rainbow round:

Then they started from their places,  
Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
Half-invisible to the view,  
Wheeling with precipitate paces  
To the melody, till they flew,  
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,  
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,  
Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
Dash'd together in blinding dew:

Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,  
The nerve-dissolving melody  
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

### III

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-  
tract,  
That girt the region with high cliff and  
lawn:

I saw that every morning, far withdrawn  
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,  
Unheeded: and detaching, fold by fold,  
From those still heights, and, slowly draw-  
ing near,

A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
Came floating on for many a month and  
year,

Unheeded: and I thought I would have  
spoken,  
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too  
late:

But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was  
broken,  
When that cold vapour touch'd the palace  
gate,

And link'd again. I saw within my head  
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as  
death,

Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,  
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

### IV

'Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!  
Here is custom come your way;  
Take my brute, and lead him in,  
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

'Bitter barmaid, waning fast!  
See that sheets are on my bed;  
What! the flower of life is past:  
It is long before you wed.

'Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,  
At the Dragon on the heath!  
Let us have a quiet hour,  
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

'I am old, but let me drink;  
Bring me spices, bring me wine;  
I remember, when I think,  
That my youth was half divine.

'Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,  
When a blanket wraps the day,  
When the rotten woodland drips,  
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

'Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee:  
What care I for any name?  
What for order or degree?

'Let me screw thee up a peg:  
Let me loose thy tongue with wine:  
Callest thou that thing a leg?  
Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

'Thou shalt not be saved by works:  
Thou hast been a sinner too:  
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,  
Empty scarecrows, I and you!



## THE VISION OF SIN

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:  
Have a rouse before the morn:  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

'We are men of ruin'd blood;  
Therefore comes it we are wise.  
Fish are we that love the mud,  
Rising to no fancy-flies.

'Name and fame! to fly sublime  
Thro' the courts, the camps, the schools,  
Is to be the ball of Time,  
Banded by the hands of fools.

'Friendship!—to be two in one—  
Let the canting liar pack!  
Well I know, when I am gone,  
How she mouths behind my back.

'Virtue!—to be good and just—  
Every heart, when sifted well,  
Is a clot of warmer dust,  
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

'O! we two as well can look  
Whited thought and cleanly life  
As the priest, above his book  
Leering at his neighbour's wife.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:  
Have a rouse before the morn:  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

'Drink, and let the parties rave:  
They are fill'd with idle spleen;  
Rising, falling, like a wave,  
For they know not what they mean.

'He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant's power;  
And the tyrant's cruel glee  
Forces on the freer hour.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup:  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

'Greet her with applausive breath,  
Freedom, gaily doth she tread;  
In her right a civic wreath,  
In her left a human head.

'No, I love not what is new;  
She is of an ancient house:  
And I think we know the hue  
Of that cap upon her brows.

'Let her go! her thirst she slakes  
Where the bloody conduit runs,  
Then her sweetest meal she makes  
On the first-born of her sons.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool—  
Visions of a perfect State:  
Drink we, last, the public fool,  
Frantic love and frantic hate.

'Chant we now some wicked stave,  
Till thy drooping courage rise,  
And the glow-worm of the grave  
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

'Fear not thou to loose thy tongue;  
Set thy hoary fancies free;  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savours well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,  
When thy nerves could understand  
What there is in loving tears,  
And the warmth of hand in hand.

'Tell me tales of thy first love—  
April hopes, the fools of chance;  
Till the graves begin to move,  
And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup:  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

'Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chap-fallen circle spreads:  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads!

'You are bones, and what of that?  
Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex!  
Tread a measure on the stones,  
Madam—if I know your sex,  
From the fashion of your bones.

## THE VISION OF SIN

'No, I cannot praise the fire  
 In your eye—nor yet your lip:  
 All the more do I admire  
 Joints of cunning workmanship.  
 'Lo! God's likeness—the ground-plan—  
 Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed:  
 Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
 Far too naked to be shamed!

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,  
 While we keep a little breath!  
 Drink to heavy Ignorance!  
 Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

'Thou art mazed, the night is long,  
 And the longer night is near:  
 What! I am not all as wrong  
 As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
 When the locks are crisp and curl'd;  
 Unto me my maudlin gall  
 And my mockeries of the world.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:  
 Mingle madness, mingle scorn!  
 Dregs of life, and lees of man:  
 Yet we will not die forlorn.'

### V

The voice grew faint: there came a further  
 change:

Once more uprose the mystic mountain-  
 range:

Below were men and horses pierced with  
 worms,

And slowly quickening into lower forms;  
 By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of

dross,  
 Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd with

moss.  
 Then some one spake: 'Behold! it was a

crime  
 Of sense avenged by sense that wore with

time.'  
 Another said: 'The crime of sense became

The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'  
 And one: 'He had not wholly quench'd his

power;  
 A little grain of conscience made him sour.'

At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
 Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'

To which an answer peal'd from that high  
 land,  
 But in a tongue no man could understand;  
 And on the glimmering limit far with-  
 drawn  
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

### TO —

#### AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

'Cursed be he that moves my bones.'

*Shakespeare's Epitaph*

YOU might have won the Poet's name,  
 If such be worth the winning now,  
 And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
 Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
 A life that moves to gracious ends  
 Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
 A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom  
 Of those that wear the Poet's crown:  
 Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
 Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,  
 Nor leave his music as of old,  
 But round him ere he scarce be cold  
 Begins the scandal and the cry:

'Proclaim the faults he would not show:  
 Break lock and seal: betray the trust:  
 Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just  
 The many-headed beast should know.'

Ah shameless! for he did but sing  
 A song that pleased us from its worth;  
 No public life was his on earth,  
 No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:  
 His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
 My Shakespeare's curse on clown and  
 knave

Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
 The little life of bank and brier,  
 The bird that pipes his lone desire  
 And dies unheard within his tree,

## TO —, AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

Than he that warbles long and loud  
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
For whom the carrion vulture waits  
To tear his heart before the crowd!

### TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
The long divine Peneian pass,  
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
With such a pencil, such a pen,  
You shadow forth to distant men,  
I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
And track'd you still on classic ground,  
I grew in gladness till I found  
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
And glisten'd—here and there alone  
The broad-limb'd Gods at random  
thrown

By fountain-urns;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
Of cavern pillars; on the swell  
The silver lily heaved and fell;  
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea  
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks  
To him who sat upon the rocks,  
And fluted to the morning sea.

---

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play!  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill;  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O sea!  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

### THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He pass'd by the town and out of the  
street,  
A light wind blew from the gates of the  
sun,  
And waves of shadow went over the  
wheat,  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in her  
cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,  
The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on his  
beak,  
And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
And the nightingale thought, 'I have sung  
many songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away.'

# ENOCH ARDEN

## AND OTHER POEMS

### ENOCH ARDEN

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left a  
chasm;  
And in the chasm are foam and yellow  
sands;  
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf  
In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and  
higher  
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd  
mill;  
And high in heaven behind it a gray down  
With Danish barrows; and a hazelwood,  
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes  
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,  
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,  
The prettiest little damsel in the port,  
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,  
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad  
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd  
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,  
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,  
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats updrawn;  
And built their castles of dissolving sand  
To watch them overflow'd, or following up  
And flying the white breaker, daily left  
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff:  
In this the children play'd at keeping  
house.  
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,  
While Annie still was mistress; but at  
times  
Enoch would hold possession for a week:  
'This is my house and this my little wife.'  
'Mine too' said Philip 'turn and turn  
about.'  
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-  
made  
Was master: then would Philip, his blue  
eyes  
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,  
Shriek out 'I hate you, Enoch,' and at this  
The little wife would weep for company,

And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,  
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood  
past,  
And the new warmth of life's ascending  
sun  
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart  
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,  
But Philip loved in silence; and the girl  
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;  
But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew it not,  
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set  
A purpose evermore before his eyes,  
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,  
To purchase his own boat, and make a  
home  
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last  
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,  
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe  
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast  
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a  
year  
On board a merchantman, and made him-  
self  
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life  
From the dread sweep of the down-stream-  
ing seas:  
And all men look'd upon him favourably:  
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth  
May  
He purchased his own boat, and made a  
home  
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up  
The narrow street that clamber'd toward  
the mill.  
Then, on a golden autumn eventide,  
The younger people making holiday,  
With bag and sack and basket, great and  
small,  
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd  
(His father lying sick and needing him)  
An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,  
Just where the prone edge of the wood  
began

## ENOCH ARDEN

To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,  
 Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,  
 His large gray eyes and weather-beaten  
 face

All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,  
 That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,  
 And in their eyes and faces read his doom;  
 Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,  
 And slipt aside, and like a wounded life  
 Crept down into the hollows of the wood;  
 There, while the rest were loud in merry-  
 making,  
 Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and  
 past  
 Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the  
 bells,  
 And merrily ran the years, seven happy  
 years,  
 Seven happy years of health and com-  
 petence,  
 And mutual love and honourable toil;  
 With children; first a daughter. In him  
 woke,  
 With his first babe's first cry, the noble  
 wish  
 To save all earnings to the uttermost,  
 And give his child a better bringing-up  
 Than his had been, or hers; a wish re-  
 new'd,  
 When two years after came a boy to be  
 The rosy idol of her solitudes,  
 While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,  
 Or often journeying landward; for in truth  
 Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-  
 spoil  
 In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,  
 Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter  
 gales,  
 Not only to the market-cross were known,  
 But in the leafy lanes behind the down,  
 Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,  
 And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,  
 Whose Friday fare was Enoch's minister-  
 ing.

Then came a change, as all things human  
 change.  
 Ten miles to northward of the narrow port  
 Open'd a larger haven: thither used

Enoch at times to go by land or sea;  
 And once when there, and clambering on  
 a mast

In harbour, by mischance he slipt and fell:  
 A limb was broken when they lifted him;  
 And while he lay recovering there, his wife  
 Bore him another son, a sickly one:  
 Another hand crept too across his trade  
 Taking her bread and theirs: and on him  
 fell,

Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,  
 Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.  
 He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,  
 To see his children leading evermore  
 Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,  
 And her, he loved, a beggar: then he pray'd  
 'Save them from this, whatever comes to  
 me.'

And while he pray'd, the master of that  
 ship  
 Enoch had served in, hearing his mis-  
 chance,  
 Came, for he knew the man and valued  
 him,  
 Reporting of his vessel China-bound,  
 And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?  
 There yet were many weeks before she  
 sail'd,  
 Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have  
 the place?  
 And Enoch all at once assented to it,  
 Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance ap-  
 pear'd  
 No graver than as when some little cloud  
 Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,  
 And isles a light in the offing: yet the  
 wife—  
 When he was gone—the children—what to  
 do?  
 Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his  
 plans;  
 To sell the boat—and yet he loved her  
 well—  
 How many a rough sea had he weather'd  
 in her!  
 He knew her, as a horseman knows his  
 horse—  
 And yet to sell her—then with what she  
 brought

## ENOCH ARDEN

Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade

With all that seamen needed or their wives—

So might she keep the house while he was gone.

Should he not trade himself out yonder? go  
This voyage more than *once*? yea twice or thrice—

As oft as needed—last, returning rich,  
Become the master of a larger craft,  
With fuller profits lead an easier life,  
Have all his pretty young ones educated,  
And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all:  
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,

Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.  
Forward she started with a happy cry,  
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;  
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,

Appraised his weight and fondled father-like,

But had no heart to break his purposes  
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring  
had girt

Her finger, Annie fought against his will:  
Yet not with brawling opposition she,  
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,  
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd  
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)  
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared  
For her or his dear children, not to go.  
He not for his own self caring but her,  
Her and her children, let her plead in vain;  
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,  
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand

To fit their little streetward sitting-room  
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.

So all day long till Enoch's last at home,  
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,

Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear

Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd  
and rang,

Till this was ended, and his careful hand,—  
The space was narrow,—having order'd all

Almost as neat and close as Nature packs  
Her blossom or her seedling, paused; and he,

Who needs would work for Annie to the last,

Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of far-  
well

Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,  
Save as his Annie's, were a laughter to him.

Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man  
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery  
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,

Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes  
Whatever came to him: and then he said  
'Annie, this voyage by the grace of God  
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.

Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,  
For I'll be back, my girl, before you know it.'

Then lightly rocking baby's cradle 'and he,  
This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—  
Nay—for I love him all the better for it—  
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees  
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,  
And make him merry, when I come home again.

Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go.'

Him running on thus hopefully she  
heard,  
And almost hoped herself; but when he  
turn'd

The current of his talk to graver things  
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing  
On providence and trust in Heaven, she  
heard,

Heard and not heard him; as the village  
girl,

Who sets her pitcher underneath the  
spring,

Musing on him that used to fill it for her,  
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

## ENOCH ARDEN

At length she spoke 'O Enoch, you are wise;  
And yet for all your wisdom well know I  
That I shall look upon your face no more.'

'Well then,' said Enoch, 'I shall look on yours.  
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here  
(He named the day) get you a seaman's glass,  
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears.'

But when the last of those last moments came,  
'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,  
Look to the babes, and till I come again  
Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.  
And fear no more for me; or if you fear  
Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.  
Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these  
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,  
The sea is His: He made it.'

Enoch rose,  
Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,  
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;  
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept  
After a night of feverous wakefulness,  
When Annie would have raised him Enoch said  
'Wake him not; let him sleep; how should the child  
Remember this?' and kiss'd him in his cot.  
But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt  
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept  
Thro' all his future; but now hastily caught  
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She when the day, that Enoch mention'd, came,  
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain: perhaps  
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;  
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;  
She saw him not: and while he stood on deck  
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail  
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for him;  
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his grave,  
Set her sad will no less to chime with his,  
But thro' not in her trade, not being bred  
To barter, nor compensating the want  
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,  
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,  
And still foreboding 'what would Enoch say?'  
For more than once, in days of difficulty  
And pressure, had she sold her wares for less  
Than what she gave in buying what she sold:  
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it; and thus,  
Expectant of that news which never came,  
Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,  
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and grew  
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it  
With all a mother's care: nevertheless,  
Whether her business often call'd her from it,  
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,  
Or means to pay the voice who best could tell  
What most it needed—howsoe'er it was,  
After a lingering,—ere she was aware,—  
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,  
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,  
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her peace  
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her),  
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.  
'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see her now,  
May be some little comfort;' therefore went,  
Past thro' the solitary room in front,  
Paused for a moment at an inner door,  
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,  
Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,  
Fresh from the burial of her little one,

## ENOCH ARDEN

Cared not to look on any human face,  
But turn'd her own toward the wall and  
wept.  
Then Philip standing up said falteringly  
'Annie, I came to ask a favour of you.'

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd  
reply  
'Favour from one so sad and so forlorn  
As I am!' half abash'd him; yet unask'd,  
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,  
He set himself beside her, saying to her:

'I came to speak to you of what he  
wish'd,  
Enoch, your husband: I have ever said  
You chose the best among us—a strong  
man:  
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand  
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.  
And wherefore did he go this weary way,  
And leave you lonely? not to see the  
world—  
For pleasure?—nay, but for the where-  
withal  
To give his babes a better bringing-up  
Than his had been, or yours: that was his  
wish.  
And if he come again, vext will he be  
To find the precious morning hours were  
lost.  
And it would vex him even in his grave,  
If he could know his babes were running  
wild  
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie,  
now—  
Have we not known each other all our lives?  
I do beseech you by the love you bear  
Him and his children not to say me nay—  
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again  
Why then he shall repay me—if you will,  
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.  
Now let me put the boy and girl to school:  
This is the favour that I came to ask.'

Then Annie with her brows against the  
wall  
Answer'd 'I cannot look you in the face,  
I seem so foolish and so broken down.  
When you came in my sorrow broke me  
down;

And now I think your kindness breaks me  
down;  
But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me:  
He will repay you: money can be repaid;  
Not kindness such as yours.'

And Philip ask'd  
'Then you will let me, Annie?'

There she turn'd,  
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon  
him,  
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,  
Then calling down a blessing on his head  
Caught at his hand, and wrung it pas-  
sionately,  
And past into the little garth beyond.  
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to  
school,  
And bought them needful books, and  
everyway,  
Like one who does his duty by his own,  
Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's  
sake,  
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,  
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,  
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he  
sent  
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and  
fruit,  
The late and early roses from his wall,  
Or conies from the down, and now and  
then,  
With some pretext of fineness in the meal  
To save the offence of charitable, flour  
From his tall mill that whistled on the  
waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind:  
Scarce could the woman when he came  
upon her,  
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude  
Light on a broken word to thank him with.  
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;  
From distant corners of the street they ran  
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;  
Lords of his house and of his mill were  
they;  
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs



## ENOCH ARDEN

Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him  
 And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd  
 As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them  
 Uncertain as a vision or a dream,  
 Faint as a figure seen in early dawn  
 Down at the far end of an avenue,  
 Going we know not where: and so ten  
 years,  
 Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,  
 Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children  
 long'd  
 To go with others, nutting to the wood,  
 And Annie would go with them; then they  
 begg'd  
 For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:  
 Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,  
 Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and  
 saying to him  
 'Come with us Father Philip' he denied;  
 But when the children pluck'd at him to  
 go,  
 He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their  
 wish,  
 For was not Annie with them? and they  
 went.

But after scaling half the weary down,  
 Just where the prone edge of the wood  
 began  
 To feather toward the hollow, all her force  
 Fail'd her; and sighing, 'Let me rest' she  
 said:  
 So Philip rested with her well-content;  
 While all the younger ones with jubilant  
 cries  
 Broke from their elders, and tumultuously  
 Down thro' the whitening hazels made a  
 plunge  
 To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or  
 broke  
 The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away  
 Their tawny clusters, crying to each other  
 And calling, here and there, about the  
 wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot  
 Her presence, and remember'd one dark  
 hour

Here in this wood, when like a wounded  
 life

He crept into the shadow: at last he said,  
 Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen, Annie,  
 How merry they are down yonder in the  
 wood.

Tired, Annie?' for she did not speak a  
 word.

'Tired?' but her face had fall'n upon her  
 hands;

At which, as with a kind of anger in him,  
 'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the ship was  
 lost!

No more of that! why should you kill  
 yourself

And make them orphans quite?' And  
 Annie said

'I thought not of it: but—I know not  
 why—

Their voices make me feel so solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat close:  
 spoke.

'Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,  
 And it has been upon my mind so long,  
 That tho' I know not when it first came  
 there,

I know that it will out at last. O Annie,  
 It is beyond all hope, against all chance,  
 That he who left you ten long years ago  
 Should still be living; well then—let me  
 speak:

I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:  
 I cannot help you as I wish to do

Unless—they say that women are so  
 quick—

Perhaps you know what I would have you  
 know—

I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove  
 A father to your children: I do think  
 They love me as a father: I am sure  
 That I love them as if they were mine  
 own;

And I believe, if you were fast my wife,  
 That after all these sad uncertain years,  
 We might be still as happy as God grants  
 To any of his creatures. Think upon it:  
 For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,  
 No burthen, save my care for you and  
 yours:

And we have known each other all our lives,

## ENOCH ARDEN

And I have loved you longer than you know.'

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she spoke:

'You have been as God's good angel in our house.

God bless you for it, God reward you for it, Philip, with something happier than myself.

Can one love twice? can you be ever loved As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?

'I am content' he answer'd 'to be loved A little after Enoch.' 'O' she cried, Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a while:

If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—

Yet wait a year, a year is not so long:

Surely I shall be wiser in a year:

O wait a little! Philip sadly said

'Annie, as I have waited all my life

I will may wait a little.' 'Nay' she cried

'I am bound: you have my promise—in a year:

Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?"

And Philip answer'd 'I will bide my year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up

Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day

Pass from the Danish barrow overhead;

Then fearing night and chill for Annie, rose

And sent his voice beneath him thro' the wood.

Up came the children laden with their spoil;

Then all descended to the port, and there

At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand,

Saying gently 'Annie, when I spoke to you, That was your hour of weakness. I was

wrong, I am always bound to you, but you are free.'

Then Annie weeping answer'd 'I am bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment as it were,

While yet she went about her household ways,

Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words, That he had loved her longer than she knew,

That autumn into autumn flash'd again, And there he stood once more before her face,

Claiming her promise. 'Is it a year?' she ask'd.

'Yes, if the nuts' he said 'be ripe again: Come out and see.' But she—she put him off—

So much to look to—such a change—a month—

Give her a month—she knew that she was bound—

A month—no more. Then Philip with his eyes

Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice

Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,

'Take your own time, Annie, take your own time.'

And Annie could have wept for pity of him;

And yet she held him on delayingly

With many a scarce-believable excuse,

Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,

Till half-another year had slipped away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,

Abhorrent of a calculation crost,

Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.

Some thought that Philip did but trifle with her;

Some that she but held off to draw him on;

And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,

As simple folk—that knew not their own minds,

And one, in whom all evil fancies clung

Like serpent eggs together, laughingly

Would hint at worse in either. Her own son

Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish;

But evermore the daughter prest upon her

To wed the man so dear to all of them

And lift the household out of poverty;

And Philip's rosy face contracting grew

Careworn and wan; and all these things fell on her

Sharp as reproach.

## ENOCH ARDEN

At last one night it chanced  
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly  
Pray'd for a sign 'my Enoch is he gone?'  
Then compass'd round by the blind wall of  
night

Brook'd not the expectant terror of her  
heart,

Started from bed, and struck herself a light,  
Then desperately seized the holy Book,  
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
Suddenly put her finger on the text,

'Under the palm-tree.' That was nothing  
to her:

No meaning there: she closed the Book  
and slept:

When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,  
Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun:  
'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy, he  
is singing

Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines  
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be  
palms

Whereof the happy people strowing cried  
"Hosanna in the highest!" Here she woke,  
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to  
him

'There is no reason why we should not  
wed.'

'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd, 'both  
our sakes,

So you will wed me, let it be at once.'

So these were wed and merrily rang the  
bells,

Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.  
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.

A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,  
She knew not whence; a whisper on her  
ear,

She knew not what; nor loved she to be  
left

Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.  
What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd,  
often

Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,  
Fearing to enter: Philip thought he knew:  
Such doubts and fears were common to  
her state,

Being with child: but when her child was  
born,

Then her new child was as herself renew'd,

Then the new mother came about her  
heart,

Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,  
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch? prosperously  
sail'd

The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at setting  
forth

The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,  
shook

And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unwept  
She slept across the summer of the world,  
Then after a long tumble about the Cape  
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,  
She passing thro' the summer world again,  
The breath of heaven came continually  
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,  
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and  
bought

Quaint monsters for the market of those  
times,

A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first  
indeed

Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,  
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head  
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her  
bows:

Then follow'd calms, and then winds  
variable,

Then baffling, a long course of them; and  
last

Storm, such as drove her under moonless  
heavens

Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers' came  
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all  
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,  
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken  
spars,

These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn  
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,  
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing  
roots;

Nor save for pity was it hard to take  
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.

There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge

# ENOCH ARDEN

They built, and thatch'd with leaves of  
palm, a hut,  
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,  
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,  
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than  
boy,  
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and  
wreck,  
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-  
life.

They could not leave him. After he was  
gone,

The two remaining found a fallen stem;  
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,  
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell  
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.  
In those two deaths he read God's warning  
'wait.'

The mountain wooded to the peak, the  
lawns  
And winding glades high up like ways to  
Heaven,  
The slender coco's drooping crown of  
plumes,  
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,  
The lustre of the long convolvuluses  
That coil'd around the stately stems, and  
ran

Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows  
And glories of the broad belt of the world,  
All these he saw: but what he fain had seen  
He could not see, the kindly human face,  
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard  
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,  
The league-long roller thundering on the  
reef,  
The moving whisper of huge trees that  
branch'd

And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep  
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,  
As down the shore he ranged, or all day  
long

Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,  
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail:  
No sail from day to day, but every day  
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts  
Among the palms and ferns and precipices;  
The blaze upon the waters to the east;

The blaze upon his island overhead;  
The blaze upon the waters to the west;  
Then the great stars that globed themselves  
in Heaven,

The hollow-bellowing ocean, and again  
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to  
watch,  
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,  
A phantom made of many phantoms moved  
Before him haunting him, or he himself  
Moved haunting people, things and places,  
known

Far in a darker isle beyond the line;  
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small  
house,  
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy  
lanes,  
The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,  
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the  
chill

November dawns and dewy-glooming  
downs,  
The gentle shower, the smell of dying  
leaves,  
And the low moan of leaden-colour'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,  
Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—  
He heard the pealing of his parish bells;  
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started  
up

Shuddering, and when the beauteous hate-  
ful isle  
Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart  
Spoken with That, which being every-  
where

Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all  
alone,  
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head  
The sunny and rainy seasons came and  
went

Year after year. His hopes to see his own,  
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,  
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely  
doom

Came suddenly to an end. Another ship  
(She wanted water) blown by baffling  
winds,

## ENOCH ARDEN

Like the 'Good Fortune', from her destined  
course,  
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she  
lay:

For since the mate had seen at early dawn  
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle  
The silent water slipping from the hills,  
They sent a crew that landing burst away  
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the  
shores

With clamour. Downward from his  
mountain gorge

Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded solitary,  
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely  
clad,

Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it  
seem'd,

With inarticulate rage, and making signs  
They knew not what: and yet he led the  
way

To where the rivulets of sweet water ran;  
And ever as he mingled with the crew,  
And heard them talking, his long-bounden  
tongue

Was loosen'd, till he made them under-  
stand;

Whom, when their casks were fill'd, they  
took aboard:

And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,  
Scarce-credited at first but more and more,  
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it:  
And clothes they gave him and free passage  
home;

But oft he work'd among the rest and  
shook

His isolation from him. None of these  
Came from his country, or could answer  
him,

If question'd, aught of what he cared to  
know.

And dull the voyage was with long delays,  
The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but ever-  
more

His fancy fled before the lazy wind  
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon  
He like a lover down thro' all his blood  
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-  
breath

Of England, blown across her ghostly wall:  
And that same morning officers and men  
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,

Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it:  
Then moving up the coast they landed him,  
Ev'n in that harbour whence he sail'd  
before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,  
But homeward—home—what home? had  
he a home?

His home, he walk'd. Bright was that after-  
noon,

Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either  
chasm,

Where either haven open'd on the deeps,  
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world  
in gray;

Cut off the length of highway on before,  
And left but narrow breadth to left and  
right

Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.  
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped  
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze  
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it  
down:

Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the  
gloom;

Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light  
Flared on him, and he came upon the  
place.

Then down the long street having slowly  
stolen,

His heart foreshadowing all calamity,  
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the  
home

Where Annie lived and loved him, and his  
babes

In those far-off seven happy years were  
born;

But finding neither light nor murmur there  
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle)  
crept

Still downward thinking 'dead or dead to  
me!'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he  
went,

Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,  
A front of timber-crost antiquity,  
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,  
He thought it must have gone; but he was  
gone

Who kept it; and his widow Miriam Lane,

## ENOCH ARDEN

With daily-dwindling profits held the  
house;  
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now  
Stiller, with yet a bed for wandering men.  
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,  
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,  
Told him, with other annals of the port,  
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so  
bow'd,

So broken—all the story of his house.  
His baby's death, her growing poverty,  
How Philip put her little ones to school,  
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,  
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the  
birth

Of Philip's child: and o'er his countenance  
No shadow past, nor motion: any one,  
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale  
Less than the teller: only when she closed  
'Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost'  
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,  
Repeated muttering 'cast away and lost,'  
Again in deeper inward whispers 'lost!'

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again;  
'If I might look on her sweet face again  
And know that she is happy.' So the  
thought

Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him  
forth,

At evening when the dull November day  
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.  
There he sat down gazing on all below;  
There did a thousand memories roll upon  
him,

Unspeaking for sadness. By and by  
The ruddy square of comfortable light,  
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,  
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures  
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes  
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the  
street,  
The latest house to landward; but behind,  
With one small gate that open'd on the  
waste,  
Flourish'd a little garden square and  
wall'd:

And in it throve an ancient evergreen,  
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk  
Of shingle, and a walk divided it:  
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and  
stole

Up by the wall, behind the yew; and  
thence

That which he better might have shunn'd,  
if griefs

Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd  
board  
Sparkled and shone; so genial was the  
hearth:

And on the right hand of the hearth he saw  
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,  
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees;  
And o'er her second father stooped a girl,  
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,  
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted  
hand

Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring  
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy  
arms,

Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they  
laugh'd;

And on the left hand of the hearth he saw  
The mother glancing often toward her  
babe,

But turning now and then to speak with  
him,

Her son, who stood beside her tall and  
strong,

And saying that which pleased him, for he  
smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life  
beheld

His wife his wife no more, and saw the  
babe

Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,  
And all the warmth, the peace, the happi-  
ness,

And his own children tall and beautiful,  
And him, that other, reigning in his place,  
Lord of his rights and of his children's  
love,—

Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him  
all,

## ENOCH ARDEN

Because things seen are mightier than  
things heard,  
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch,  
and fear'd  
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,  
Which in one moment, like the blast of  
doom,  
Would shatter all the happiness of the  
hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,  
Lest the harsh shingle should grate under-  
foot,  
And feeling all along the garden-wall,  
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be  
found,  
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and  
closed,  
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,  
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that  
his knees  
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug  
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

'Too hard to bear! why did they take  
me thence?  
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou  
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
A little longer! aid me, give me strength  
Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
Help me not to break in upon her peace.  
My children too! must I not speak to  
these?

They know me not. I should betray my-  
self.

Never: No father's kiss for me—the girl  
So like her mother, and the boy, my son.'

There speech and thought and nature  
fail'd a little,  
And he lay tranced; but when he rose and  
paced  
Back toward his solitary home again,  
All down the long and narrow street he  
went

Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,  
'Not to tell her, never to let her know.'

He was not all unhappy. His resolve  
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore  
Prayer from a living source within the will,  
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,  
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,  
Kept him a living soul. 'This miller's wife'  
He said to Miriam 'that you spoke about,  
Has she no fear that her first husband  
lives?'

'Ay, ay, poor soul' said Miriam, 'fear  
enow!

If you could tell her you had seen him  
dead,

Why, that would be her comfort;' and he  
thought

'After the Lord has call'd me she shall  
know,

I wait His time,' and Enoch set himself,  
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.  
Almost to all things could he turn his hand.  
Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought  
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or  
help'd

At lading and unlading the tall barks,  
That brought the stinted commerce of  
those days;

Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:  
Yet since he did but labour for himself,  
Work without hope, there was not life in it  
Whereby the man could live; and as the  
year

Roll'd itself round again to meet the day  
When Enoch had return'd, a languor came  
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually  
Weakening the man, till he could do no  
more,

But kept the house, his chair, and last his  
bed.

And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.  
For sure no gladlier does the stranded  
wreck

See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall  
The boat that bears the hope of life ap-  
proach

To save the life despair'd of, than he saw  
Death dawning on him, and the close of  
all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kind-  
lier hope  
On Enoch thinking 'after I am gone,

## ENOCH ARDEN

Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last.  
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said  
'Woman, I have a secret—only swear,  
Before I tell you—swear upon the book  
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'

'Dead,' clamour'd the good woman, 'hear him talk!

I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round.'

'Swear' added Enoch sternly 'on the book.'  
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.

Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,  
'Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?'  
'Know him?' she said 'I knew him far away.

Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;

Held his head high, and cared for no man, he.'

Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her;  
'His head is low, and no man cares for him.  
I think I have not three days more to live;  
I am the man.' At which the woman gave  
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.

'You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was a foot  
Higher than you be.' Enoch said again  
'My God has bow'd me down to what I am;  
My grief and solitude have broken me;  
Nevertheless, know you that I am he  
Who married—but that name has twice  
been changed—

I married her who married Philip Ray.  
Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voyage,  
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,  
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,  
And how he kept it. As the woman heard,  
Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,  
While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly  
To rush abroad all round the little haven,  
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;  
But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,

Saying only 'See your bairns before you go!  
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and arose  
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung  
A moment on her words, but then replied:

'Woman, disturb me not now at the last,  
But let me hold my purpose till I die.  
Sit down again; mark me and understand,

While I have power to speak. I charge you now,

When you shall see her, tell her that I died  
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her;  
Save for the bar between us, loving her  
As when she laid her head beside my own.  
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw  
So like her mother, that my latest breath  
Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.

And tell my son that I died blessing him.  
And say to Philip that I blest him too;  
He never meant us any thing but good.  
But if my children care to see me dead,  
Who hardly knew me living, let them come,  
I am their father; but she must not come,  
For my dead face would vex her after-life.  
And now there is but one of all my blood  
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be:  
This hair is his: she cut it off and gave it,  
And I have borne it with me all these years.  
And thought to bear it with me to my grave;

But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,

My babe in bliss: wherefore when I am gone,  
Take, give her this, for it may comfort her:  
It will moreover be a token to her,  
That I am he.'

He ceased; and Miriam Lane  
Made such a voluble answer promising all,  
That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her  
Repeating all he wish'd, and once again  
She promised.

Then the third night after this,  
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,  
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,

There came so loud a calling of the sea,  
That all the houses in the haven rang.  
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad  
Crying with a loud voice 'A sail! a sail!  
I am saved;' and so fell back and spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.  
And when they buried him the little port  
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.



## THE BROOK

### THE BROOK

HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to the  
 East  
 And he for Italy—too late—too late:  
 One whom the strong sons of the world  
 despise;  
 For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and  
 share,  
 And mellow metres more than cent for  
 cent;  
 Nor could he understand how money  
 breeds,  
 Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could  
 make  
 The thing that is not as the thing that is.  
 O had he lived! In our schoolbooks we say,  
 Of those that held their heads above the  
 crowd,  
 They flourish'd then or then; but life in  
 him  
 Could scarce be said to flourish, only  
 touch'd  
 On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
 When all the wood stands in a mist of  
 green,  
 And nothing perfect: yet the brook he  
 loved,  
 For which, in branding summers of Bengal,  
 Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry  
 air  
 I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,  
 To me that loved him; for 'O brook,' he  
 says,  
 'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his  
 rhyme,  
 'Whence come you?' and the brook, why  
 not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
 I make a sudden sally,  
 And sparkle out among the fern,  
 To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
 Or slip between the ridges,  
 By twenty thorns, a little town,  
 And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go  
 But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn  
 out,  
 Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley  
 bridge,  
 It has more ivy; there the river; and there  
 Stands Philip's farm where brook and river  
 meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
 In little sharps and trebles,  
 I bubble into eddying bays,  
 I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
 By many a field and fallow,  
 And many a fairy foreland set  
 With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook or  
 bird;  
 Old Philip; all about the fields you caught  
 His weary daylong chirping, like the dry  
 High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer  
 grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
 With here a blossom sailing,  
 And here and there a lusty trout,  
 And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy fluke  
 Upon me, as I travel  
 With many a silvery waterbreak  
 Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
 To join the brimming river,  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one child!  
 A maiden of our century, yet most meek;  
 A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;  
 Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;  
 Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the  
 shell  
 Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,  
 Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,  
 James Willows, of one name and heart with  
 her.

## THE BROOK

For here I came, twenty years back—the week

Before I parted with poor Edmund; crost  
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,  
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam  
Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,  
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The

gate,  
Half-parted from a weak and scolding  
hinge,

Stuck; and he clamour'd from a casement,  
"Run"

To Katie somewhere in the walks below,  
"Run, Katie!" Katie never ran: she moved  
To meet me, winding under woodbine  
bowers,

A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,  
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

'What was it? less of sentiment than  
sense

Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of those  
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,  
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philan-  
thropies,

Divorce the Feeling from her mate the  
Deed.

'She told me. She and James had  
quarrell'd. Why?

What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no  
cause;

James had no cause: but when I prest the  
cause,

I learnt that James had flickering jealousies  
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James?  
I said.

But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from  
mine,

And sketching with her slender pointed  
foot

Some figure like a wizard pentagram  
On garden gravel, let my query pass  
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd  
If James were coming. "Coming every  
day,"

She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,  
But evermore her father came across  
With some long-winded tale, and broke  
him short;

And James departed vext with him and  
her."

How could I help her? "Would I—was it  
wrong?"

(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she  
spoke)

"O would I take her father for one hour,  
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"

And even while she spoke, I saw where  
James

Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,  
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-  
sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!  
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out  
To show the farm: full willingly he rose:  
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling  
lanes

Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.  
He praised his land, his horses, his ma-  
chines;

He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs,  
his dogs;

He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-  
hens;

His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
Approved him, bowing at their own  
deserts:

Then from the plaintive mother's teat he  
took

Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming  
each,

And naming those, his friends, for whom  
they were:

Then crost the common into Darnley chase  
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and  
fern

Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said:  
"That was the four-year-old I sold the  
Squire."

And there he told a long long-winded tale  
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at  
grass,

And how it was the thing his daughter  
wish'd,

And how he sent the bailiff to the farm

## THE BROOK

To learn the price, and what the price he  
ask'd,  
And how the bailiff swore that he was  
mad,

But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;  
He gave them line: and five days after that  
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
Who then and there had offer'd something  
more,

But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;  
He knew the man; the colt would fetch its  
price;

He gave them line: and how by chance at  
last

(It might be May or April, he forgot,  
The last of April or the first of May)  
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
And, talking from the point, he drew  
him in,

And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,  
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of  
haven, he,

Poor fellow, could he help it? recom-  
menced,

And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,  
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,  
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,  
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,  
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
And with me Philip, talking still; and so  
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling  
sun,

And following our own shadows thrice as  
long

As when they follow'd us from Philip's  
door,

Arrived, and found the sun of sweet con-  
tent

Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things  
well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
'That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows;  
I make the netted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses;  
I linger by my shingly bars;  
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these are  
gone,

All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund,  
sleeps,

Not by the well-known stream and rustic  
spire,

But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace: and he,  
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words  
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:

I scraped the lichen from it: Katie walks  
By the long wash of Australasian seas  
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,  
And breathes in April-autumns. All are  
gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile  
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind  
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the  
brook

A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,  
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low  
breath

Of tender air made tremble in the hedge  
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony  
rings;

And he look'd up. There stood a maiden  
near,

Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared  
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair

In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the  
shell

Divides threefold to show the fruit within:  
Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you from  
the farm?'

'Yes' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little: par-  
don me;

What do they call you?' 'Katie.' 'That were  
strange.

What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!' 'That is  
my name.'

'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-  
perplex,

## THE BROOK

That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd,  
till he  
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,  
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his  
dream.  
Then looking at her; 'Too happy, fresh  
and fair,  
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best  
bloom,  
To be the ghost of one who bore your  
name  
About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie, 'we  
came back.  
We bought the farm we tenanted before.  
Am I so like her? so they said on board.  
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
That most she loves to talk of, come with  
me.  
My brother James is in the harvest-field:  
But she—you will be welcome—O, come  
in!'

### AYLMER'S FIELD

1793

DUST are our frames; and, gilded dust, our  
pride  
Looks only for a moment whole and sound;  
Like that long-buried body of the king,  
Found lying with his urns and ornaments,  
Which at a touch of light, an air of heaven,  
Slipt into ashes, and was found no more.

Here is a story which in rougher shape  
Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I saw  
Sunning himself in a waste field alone—  
Old, and a mine of memories—who had  
served,  
Long since, a bygone Rector of the place,  
And been himself a part of what he told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that almighty man,  
The county God—in whose capacious hall,  
Hung with a hundred shields, the family  
tree  
Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate  
king—  
Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the  
spire,

Stood from his walls and wing'd his entry-  
gates  
And swang besides on many a windy sign—  
Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head  
Saw from his windows nothing save his  
own—  
What lovelier of his own had he than her,  
His only child, his Edith, whom he loved  
As heiress and not heir regretfully?  
But 'he that marries her marries her name'  
This fiat somewhat soothed himself and  
wife,  
His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,  
Insidious as the Queen upon a card;  
Her all of thought and bearing hardly more  
Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn,  
Little about it stirring save a brook!  
A sleepy land, where under the same wheel  
The same old rut would deepen year by  
year;  
Where almost all the village had one name;  
Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at the Hall  
And Averill Averill at the Rectory  
Thrice over; so that Rectory and Hall,  
Bound in an immemorial intimacy,  
Were open to each other; tho' to dream  
That Love could bind them closer well had  
made  
The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle up  
With horror, worse than had he heard his  
priest  
Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men  
Daughters of God; so sleepy was the land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd  
it so,  
Somewhere beneath his own low range of  
roofs,  
Have also set his many-shielded tree?  
There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage  
once.  
When the red rose was redder than itself,  
And York's white rose as red as Lancas-  
ter's,  
With wounded peace which each had  
prick'd to death.  
'Not proven' Averill said, or laughingly  
'Some other race of Averills'—prov'n or no,  
What cared he? what, if other or the same?

## AYLMER'S FIELD

He lean'd not on his fathers but himself.  
 But Leolin, his brother, living oft  
 With Averill, and a year or two before  
 Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away  
 By one low voice to one dear neighbour-  
     hood,  
 Would often, in his walks with Edith,  
     claim  
 A distant kinship to the gracious blood  
 That shook the heart of Edith hearing him.

Sanguine he was: a but less vivid hue  
 Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom  
 Flamed in his cheek; and eager eyes, that  
     still

Took joyful note of all things joyful,  
     beam'd,

Beneath a manelike mass of rolling gold,  
 Their best and brightest, when they dwelt  
     on hers,

Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else,  
 But subject to the season or the mood,  
 Shone like a mystic star between the less  
 And greater glory varying to and fro,  
 We know not wherefore; bounteously  
     made,

And yet so finely, that a troublous touch  
 Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in a  
     day,

A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.  
 And these had been together from the first.  
 Leolin's first nurse was, five years after,  
     hers:

So much the boy foreran; but when his  
     date

Doubled her own, for want of playmates,  
     he

(Since Averill was a decad and a half  
 His elder, and their parents underground)  
 Had tost his ball and flown his kite, and  
     roll'd

His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt  
 Against the rush of the air in the prone  
     swing,

Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain,  
     arranged

Her garden, sow'd her name and kept it  
     green

In living letters, told her fairy-tales,  
 Show'd her the fairy footings on the grass,  
 The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,

The petty marestalk forest, fairy pines,  
 Or from the tiny pitted target blew  
 What look'd a flight of fairy arrows aim'd  
 All at one mark, all hitting: make-believes  
 For Edith and himself: or else he forged,  
 But that was later, boyish histories  
 Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon, wreck,  
 Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true  
     love

Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and faint,  
 But where a passion yet unborn perhaps  
 Lay hidden as the music of the moon  
 Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale.  
 And thus together, save for college-times  
 Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair  
 As ever painter painted, poet sang,  
 Or Heaven in lavish bounty moulded, grew.  
 And more and more, the maiden woman-  
     grown,

He wasted hours with Averill; there, when  
     first

The tented winter-field was broken up  
 Into that phalanx of the summer spears  
 That soon should wear the garland; there  
     again

When burr and bine were gather'd; lastly  
     there

At Christmas; ever welcome at the Hall,  
 On whose dull sameness his full tide of  
     youth

Broke with a phosphorescence charming  
     even

My lady; and the Baronet yet had laid  
 No bar between them: dull and self-  
     involved,

Tall and erect, but bending from his height  
 With half-allowing smiles for all the world,  
 And mighty courteous in the main—his  
     pride

Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring—  
 He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,  
 Would care no more for Leolin's walking  
     with her

Than for his old Newfoundland's, when  
     they ran

To loose him at the stables, for he rose  
 Twofooted at the limit of his chain,  
 Roaring to make a third: and how should  
     Love,

Whom the cross-lightnings of four chance-  
     met eyes

## AYLMER'S FIELD

Flash into fiery life from nothing, follow  
Such dear familiarities of dawn?  
Seldom, but when he does, Master of all.

So these young hearts not knowing that  
they loved,  
Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar  
Between them, nor by plight or broken ring  
Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,  
Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied  
By Averill: his, a brother's love, that hung  
With wings of brooding shelter o'er her  
peace,  
Might have been other, save for Leolin's—  
Who knows? but so they wander'd, hour  
by hour  
Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd, and  
drank  
The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.  
For out beyond her lodges, where the  
brook  
Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran  
By sallowy rims, arose the labourers'  
homes,  
A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls  
That dimpling died into each other, huts  
At random scatter'd, each a nest in bloom.  
Her art, her hand, her counsel all had  
wrought  
About them: here was one that, summer-  
blanch'd,  
Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's-  
joy  
In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here  
The warm-blue breathings of a hidden  
hearth  
Broke from a bower of vine and honey-  
suckle:  
One look'd all rosetree, and another wore  
A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars:  
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers  
About it; this, a milky-way on earth,  
Like visions in the Northern dreamer's  
heavens,  
A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;  
One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves  
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;  
Each, its own charm; and Edith's every-  
where;

And Edith ever visitant with him,  
He but less loved than Edith, of her poor:  
For she—so lowly-lovely and so loving,  
Queenly responsive when the loyal hand  
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she past,  
Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,  
Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height  
That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice  
Of comfort and an open hand of help,  
A splendid presence flattering the poor  
roofs

Revered as theirs, but kindlier than them-  
selves

To ailing wife or wailing infancy  
Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored;  
He, loved for her and for himself. A grasp  
Having the warmth and muscle of the  
heart,

A childly way with children, and a laugh  
Ringing like proven golden coinage true,  
Were no false passport to that easy realm,  
Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,  
Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth  
The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,  
Heard the good mother softly whisper  
'Bless,  
God bless 'em: marriages are made in  
Heaven.'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.  
My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced  
With half a score of swarthy faces came.  
His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly  
Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;  
Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,  
Tho' seeming boastful: so when first he  
dash'd  
Into the chronicle of a deedful day,  
Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile  
Of patron 'Good! my lady's kinsman!  
good!'

My lady with her fingers interlock'd,  
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,  
Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear  
To listen: unawares they flitted off,  
Busying themselves about the flowerage  
That stood from out a stiff brocade in  
which,

The meteor of a splendid season, she,  
Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,  
Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days:

## AYLMER'S FIELD

But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him  
Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his  
life:

Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye,  
Hated him with a momentary hate.  
Wife-hunting, as the rumour ran, was he:  
I know not, for he spoke not, only shower'd  
His oriental gifts on everyone  
And most on Edith: like a storm he came,  
And shook the house, and like a storm he  
went.

Among the gifts he left her (possibly  
He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return  
When others had been tested) there was  
one,  
A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it  
Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd itself  
Fine as ice-ferns on January panes  
Made by a breath. I know not whence at  
first,  
Nor of what race, the work; but as he told  
The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves  
He got it; for their captain after fight,  
His comrades having fought their last  
below,  
Was climbing up the valley; at whom he  
shot:  
Down from the beetling crag to which he  
clung  
Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,  
This dagger with him, which when now  
admired  
By Edith whom his pleasure was to please,  
At once the costly Sahib yielded to her.

And Leolin, coming after he was gone,  
Tost over all her presents petulantly:  
And when she show'd the wealthy scab-  
bard, saying  
'Look what a lovely piece of workmanship!'  
Slight was his answer 'Well—I care not  
for it.'  
Then playing with the blade he prick'd his  
hand,  
'A gracious gift to give a lady, this!'  
'But would it be more gracious' ask'd the  
girl  
'Were I to give this gift of his to one  
That is no lady?' 'Gracious? No' said he.  
'Me?—but I cared not for it. O pardon me,

I seem to be ungraciousness itself.'  
'Take it' she added sweetly, 'tho' his gift;  
For I am more ungracious ev'n than you,  
I care not for it either;' and he said  
'Why then I love it:' but Sir Aylmer past,  
And neither loved nor liked the thing he  
heard.

The next day came a neighbour. Blues  
and reds  
They talk'd of: blues were sure of it, he  
thought:  
Then of the latest fox—where started—  
kill'd  
In such a bottom: 'Peter had the brush,  
My Peter, first:' and did Sir Aylmer know  
That great pock-pitten fellow had been  
caught?  
Then made his pleasure echo, hand to hand,  
And rolling as it were the substance of it  
Between his palms a moment up and  
down—  
'The birds were warm, the birds were  
warm upon him;  
We have him now:' and had Sir Aylmer  
heard—  
Nay, but he must—the land was ringing  
of it—  
This blacksmith border-marriage—one  
they knew—  
Raw from the nursery—who could trust  
a child?  
That cursed France with her egalities!  
And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially  
With nearing chair and lower'd accent)  
think—  
For people talk'd—that it was wholly wise  
To let that handsome fellow Averill walk  
So freely with his daughter? people  
talk'd—  
The boy might get a notion into him;  
The girl might be entangled ere she knew.  
Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening spoke:  
'The girl and boy, Sir, know their differ-  
ences!'  
'Good,' said his friend, 'but watch!' and  
he, 'Enough,  
More than enough, Sir! I can guard my  
own.'  
They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer  
watch'd.

## AYLMER'S FIELD

Pale, for on her the thunders of the  
house  
Had fallen first, was Edith that same night;  
Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a rough  
piece

Of early rigid colour, under which  
Withdrawing by the counter door to that  
Which Leolin open'd, she ~~sat~~ back upon  
him

A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He, as one  
Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,  
And pelted with outrageous epithets,  
Turning beheld the Powers of the House  
On either side the hearth, indignant; her,  
Cooling her false cheek with a featherfan,  
Him, glaring by his own stale devils' spurr'd,  
And, like a beast hard-riden, breathing  
hard.

'Ungenerous, dishonourable, base,  
Presumptuous! trusted as he was with her,  
The sole succeder to their wealth, their  
lands,

The last remaining pillar of their house,  
The one transmitter of their ancient name,  
Their child.' 'Our child!' 'Our heiress!'  
'Ours!' for still,

Like echoes from beyond a hollow, came  
Her sicklier iteration. Last he said,  
'Boy, mark me! for your fortunes are to  
make.

I swear you shall not make them out of  
mine.

Now inasmuch as you have practised on  
her,

Perplexed her, made her half forget herself,  
Swerve from her duty to herself and us—  
Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossible,  
Far as we track ourselves—I say that this—  
Else I withdraw favour and countenance  
From you and yours for ever—shall you  
do.

Sir, when you see her—but you shall not  
see her—

No, you shall write, and not to her, but me:  
And you shall say that having spoken  
with me,

And after look'd into yourself, you find  
That you meant nothing—as indeed you  
know

That you meant nothing. Such a match as  
this!

Impossible, prodigious! These were  
words,

As meted by his measure of himself,  
Arguing boundless forbearance: after  
which,

And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, 'I  
So foul a traitor to myself and her,  
Never oh never,' for about as long  
As the wind-hover hangs in balance,  
paused

Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm  
within,

Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and  
crying

'Boy, should I find you by my doors again,  
My men shall lash you from them like a  
dog;

Hence!' with a sudden execration drove  
The footstool from before him, and arose;  
So, stammering 'scoundrel' out of teeth  
that ground

As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin still  
Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old man  
Follow'd, and under his own lintel stood  
Storming with lifted hands, a hoary face  
Meet for the reverence of the hearth, but  
now,

Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd moon,  
Vext with unworthy madness, and de-  
form'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful eye  
That watch'd him, till he heard the pon-  
derous door

Close, crashing with long echoes thro' the  
land,

Went Leolin; then, his passions all in flood  
And masters of his motion, furiously  
Down thro' the bright lawns to his brother's  
ran,

And foam'd away his heart at Averill's  
ear:

Whom Averill solaced as he might, amazed:  
The man was his, had been his father's,  
friend:

He must have seen, himself had seen it  
long;

He must have known, himself had known:  
besides,

He never yet had set his daughter forth  
Here in the woman-markets of the west,



## AYLMER'S FIELD

Where our Caucasians let themselves be sold.

Some one, he thought, had slander'd Leolin to him.

'Brother, for I have loved you more as son Than brother, let me tell you: I myself—What is their pretty saying? jilted, is it? Jilted I was: I say it for your peace.

Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the shame The woman should have borne, humiliated, I lived for years a stunted sunless life; Till after our good parents past away Watching your growth, I seem'd again to grow.

Leolin, I almost sin in envying you: The very whitest lamb in all my fold Loves you: I know her: the worst thought she has

Is whiter even than her pretty hand: She must prove true: for, brother, where two fight

The strongest wins, and truth and love are strength,

And you are happy: let her parents be.'

But Leolin cried out the more upon them—

Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress, wealth,

Their wealth, their heiress! wealth enough was theirs

For twenty matches. Were he lord of this, Why twenty boys and girls should marry on it,

And forty blest ones bless him, and himself

Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He believed This filthy marriage-hindering Mammon made

The harlot of the cities: nature crost Was mother of the foul adulteries

That saturate soul with body. Name, too! name,

Their ancient name! they *might* be proud; its worth

Was being Edith's. Ah how pale she had look'd

Darling, to-night! they must have rated her

Beyond all tolerance. These old pheasant-lords,

These partridge-breeders of a thousand years,

Who had mildew'd in their thousands, doing nothing

Since Egbert—why, the greater their disgrace!

Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in that! Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler? fools, With such a vantage-ground for nobleness! He had known a man, a quintessence of man,

The life of all—who madly loved—and he, Thwarted by one of these old father-fools, Had rioted his life out, and made an end. He would not do it! her sweet face and faith

Held him from that: but he had powers, he knew it:

Back would he to his studies, make a name, Name, fortune too: the world should ring of him

To shame these mouldy Aylmers in their graves:

Chancellor, or what is greatest would he be—

'O brother, I am grieved to learn your grief—

Give me my fling, and let me say my say.'

At which, like one that sees his own excess,

And easily forgives it as his own, He laugh'd; and then was mute; but presently

Wept like a storm: and honest Averill seeing

How low his brother's mood had fallen, fetch'd

His richest beeswing from a binn reserved For banquets, praised the waning red, and told

The vintage—when *this* Aylmer came of age—

Then drank and past it; till at length the two,

Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again, agreed That much allowance must be made for men.

After an angry dream this kindlier glow Faded with morning, but his purpose held.

## AYLMER'S FIELD

Yet once by night again the lovers met,  
A perilous meeting under the tall pines  
That darken'd all the northward of her  
Hall.

Him, to her meek and modest bosom prest  
In agony, she promised that no force,  
Persuasion, no, nor death could alter her:  
He, passionately hopefuller, would go,  
Labour for his own Edith, and return  
In such a sunlight of prosperity  
He should not be rejected. 'Write to me!  
They loved me, and because I love their  
child

They hate me: there is war between us,  
dear,

Which breaks all bonds but ours; we must  
remain

Sacred to one another.' So they talk'd,  
Poor children, for their comfort: the wind  
blew;

The rain of heaven, and their own bitter  
tears,

Tears, and the careless rain of heaven,  
mixt

Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each other  
In darkness, and above them roar'd the  
pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task ourselves  
To learn a language known but smatter-  
ingly

In phrases here and there at random, toil'd  
Mastering the lawless science of our law,  
That codeless myriad of precedent,  
That wilderness of single instances,  
Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune led,  
May beat a pathway out to wealth and  
fame.

The jests, that flash'd about the pleader's  
room,

Lightning of the hour, the pun, the scurri-  
lous tale,—

Old scandals buried now seven decads deep  
In other scandals that have lived and died,  
And left the living scandal that shall die—  
Were dead to him already; bent as he was  
To make disproof of scorn, and strong in  
hopes,

And prodigal of all brain-labour he,  
Charier of sleep, and wine, and exercise,  
Except when for a breathing-while at eve,

Some niggard fraction of an hour, he ran  
Beside the river-bank: and then indeed  
Harder the times were, and the hands of  
power

Were bloodier, and the according hearts of  
men

Seem'd harder too; but the soft river-  
breeze,

Which fann'd the gardens of that rival rose  
Yet fragrant in a heart remembering

His former talks with Edith, on him  
breathed

Far purelier in his rushings to and fro,  
After his books, to flush his blood with air,

Then to his books again. My lady's cousin,  
Half-sickening of his pension'd afternoon,

Drove in upon the student once or twice,  
Ran a Malayan amuck against the times,

Had golden hopes for France and all man-  
kind,

Answer'd all queries touching those at  
home

With a heaved shoulder and a saucy smile,  
And fain had haled him out into the world,

And air'd him there: his nearer friend  
would say

'Screw not the chord too sharply lest it  
snap.'

Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger forth  
From where his worldless heart had kept  
it warm,

Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.  
And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of him

Approvingly, and prophesied his rise:  
For heart, I think, help'd head: her letters

too,  
Tho' far between, and coming fitfully

Like broken music, written as she found  
Or made occasion, being strictly watch'd,

Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till he  
saw

An end, a hope, a light breaking upon him.

But they that cast her spirit into flesh,  
Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued them-  
selves

To sell her, those good parents, for her  
good.

Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth  
Might lie within their compass, him they  
lured

## AYLMER'S FIELD

Into their net made pleasant by the baits  
Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.  
So month by month the noise about their  
doors,

And distant blaze of those dull banquets,  
made

The nightly wirer of their innocent hare  
Falter before he took it. All in vain.  
Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd  
Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit  
So often, that the folly taking wings  
Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the wind  
With rumour, and became in other fields  
A mockery to the yeomen over ale,  
And laughter to their lords: but those at  
home,

As hunters round a hunted creature draw  
The cordon close and closer toward the  
death,

Narrow'd her goings out and comings in;  
Forbad her first the house of Averill,  
Then closed her access to the wealthier  
farms,

Last from her own home-circle of the poor  
They barr'd her: yet she bore it: yet her  
cheek

Kept colour: wondrous! but, O mystery!  
What amulet drew her down to that old  
oak,

So old, that twenty years before, a part  
Falling had let appear the brand of John—  
Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree, but  
now

The broken base of a black tower, a cave  
Of touchwood, with a single flourishing  
spray.

There the manorial lord too curiously  
Raking in that millennial touchwood-dust  
Found for himself a bitter treasure-trove;  
Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and read  
Writhing a letter from his child, for which  
Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,  
A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to fly,  
But scared with threats of jail and halter  
gave

To him that fluster'd his poor parish wits  
The letter which he brought, and swore  
besides

To play their go-between as heretofore  
Nor let them know themselves betray'd;  
and then,

Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,  
went

Hating his own lean heart and miserable.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot  
dream

The father panting woke, and oft, as dawn  
Aroused the black republic on his elms,  
Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue  
brush'd

Thro' the dim meadow toward his treasure-  
trove,

Seized it, took home, and to my lady,—  
who made

A downward crescent of her minion mouth,  
Listless in all despondence,—read; and  
tore,

As if the living passion symbol'd there  
Were living nerves to feel the rent; and  
burnt,

Now chafing at his own great self defied,  
Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks of  
scorn

In babyisms, and dear diminutives  
Scatter'd all over the vocabulary  
Of such a love as like a chidden child,  
After much wailing, hush'd itself at last  
Hopeless of answer: then tho' Averill wrote  
And bad him with good heart sustain him-  
self—

All would be well—the lover heeded not,  
But passionately restless came and went,  
And rustling once at night about the place,  
There by a keeper shot at, slightly hurt,  
Raging return'd: nor was it well for her  
Kept to the garden now, and grove of pines,  
Watch'd even there; and one was set to  
watch

The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd  
them all,

Yet bitterer from his readings: once indeed,  
Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride in  
her,

She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her tenderly  
Not knowing what possess'd him: that one  
kiss

Was Leolin's one strong rival upon earth;  
Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,  
Seem'd hope's returning rose: and then  
ensued

A Martin's summer of his faded love,

## AYLMER'S FIELD

Or ordeal by kindness; after this  
 He seldom crost his child without a sneer;  
 The mother flow'd in shallower acrimonies:  
 Never one kindly smile, one kindly word:  
 So that the gentle creature shut from all  
 Her charitable use, and face to face  
 With twenty months of silence, slowly lost  
 Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on life.  
 Last, some low fever ranging round to spy  
 The weakness of a people or a house,  
 Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer, or  
 men,  
 Or almost all that is, hurting the hurt—  
 Save Christ as we believe him—found the  
 girl

And flung her down upon a couch of fire,  
 Where careless of the household faces near,  
 And crying upon the name of Leolin,  
 She, and with her the race of Aylmer, past.

Star to star vibrates light: may soul to soul  
 Strike thro' a finer element of her own?  
 So,—from afar,—touch as at once? or why  
 That night, that moment, when she named  
 his name,

Did the keen shriek 'Yes love, yes, Edith,  
 yes,'

Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers  
 woke,

And came upon him half-arisen from sleep,  
 With a weird bright eye, sweating and  
 trembling,

His hair as it were crackling into flames,  
 His body half flung forward in pursuit,  
 And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp a  
 flyer:

Nor knew he wherefore he had made the  
 cry;

And being much befooled and idioted  
 By the rough amity of the other, sank  
 As into sleep again. The second day,  
 My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,  
 A breaker of the bitter news from home,  
 Found a dead man, a letter edged with death  
 Beside him, and the dagger which himself  
 Gave Edith, redden'd with no bandit's  
 blood:

'From Edith' was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his  
 death.

And when he came again, his flock be-  
 lieved—

Beholding how the years which are not  
 Time's

Had blasted him—that many thousand  
 days

Were clipt by horror from his term of life.  
 Yet the sad mother, for the second death  
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of  
 the first,

And being used to find her pastor texts,  
 Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying him  
 To speak before the people of her child,  
 And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day rose:  
 Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded  
 woods

Was all the life of it; for hard on these,  
 A breathless burthen of low-folded heavens  
 Stifled and chill'd at once; but every roof  
 Sent out a listener: many too had known  
 Edith among the hamlets round, and since  
 The parents' harshness and the hapless  
 loves

And double death were widely murmur'd,  
 left

Their own gray tower, or plain-faced  
 tabernacle,

To hear him; all in mourning these, and  
 those

With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove  
 Or kerchief; while the church,—one night,  
 except

For greenish glimmerings thro' the lancets,  
 —made

Still paler the pale head of him, who  
 tower'd

Above them, with his hopes in either grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd Averill,  
 His face magnetic to the hand from which  
 Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labour'd thro'  
 His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse  
 'Behold,

Your house is left unto you desolate!'

But lapsed into so long a pause again

As half amazed half frightened all his flock:  
 Then from his height and loneliness of  
 grief

Bore down in flood, and dash'd his angry  
 heart

Against the desolations of the world.

## AYLMER'S FIELD

Never since our bad earth became one  
 sea,  
 Which rolling o'er the palaces of the proud,  
 And all but those who knew the living  
 God—  
 Eight that were left to make a purer  
 world—  
 When since had flood, fire, earthquake,  
 thunder, wrought  
 Such waste and havock as the idolatries,  
 Which from the low light of mortality  
 Shot up their shadows to the Heaven of  
 Heavens,  
 And worshipt their own darkness in the  
 Highest?  
 'Gash thyself, priest, and honour thy brute  
 Baäl,  
 And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,  
 For with thy worst self hast thou clothed  
 thy God.  
 Then came a Lord in no wise like to Baäl.  
 The babe shall lead the lion. Surely now  
 The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.  
 Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine  
 own lusts!—  
 No coarse and blockish God of acreage  
 Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel to—  
 Thy God is far diffused in noble groves  
 And princely halls, and farms, and flowing  
 lawns,  
 And heaps of living gold that daily grow,  
 And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries.  
 In such a shape dost thou behold thy God.  
 Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him*; for  
 thine  
 Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair  
 Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while  
 The deathless ruler of thy dying house  
 Is wounded to the death that cannot die;  
 And tho' thou numberest with the followers  
 Of One who cried, "Leave all and follow  
 me."  
 Thee therefore with His light about thy  
 feet,  
 Thee with His message ringing in thine  
 ears,  
 Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord from  
 Heaven,  
 Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,  
 Wonderful, Prince of peace, the Mighty  
 God,

Count the more base idolater of the two;  
 Crueller: as not passing thro' the fire  
 Bodies, but souls—thy children's—thro'  
 the smoke,  
 The blight of low desires—darkening thine  
 own  
 To thine own likeness; or if one of these,  
 Thy better born unhappily from thee,  
 Should, as by miracle, grow straight and  
 fair—  
 Friends, I was bid to speak of such a one  
 By those who most have cause to sorrow  
 for her—  
 Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,  
 Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,  
 Fair as the Angel that said "Hail!" she  
 seem'd,  
 Who entering fill'd the house with sudden  
 light.  
 For so mine own was brighten'd: where  
 indeed  
 The roof so lowly but that beam of Heaven  
 Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway?  
 whose the babe  
 Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,  
 Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child  
 of shame  
 The common care whom no one cared for,  
 leapt  
 To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,  
 As with the mother he had never known,  
 In gambols; for her fresh and innocent eyes  
 Had such a star of morning in their blue,  
 That all neglected places of the field  
 Broke into nature's music when they saw  
 her.  
 Low was her voice, but won mysterious  
 way  
 Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder one  
 Was all but silence—free of alms her  
 hand—  
 The hand that robed your cottage-walls  
 with flowers  
 Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones;  
 How often placed upon the sick man's  
 brow  
 Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow  
 smooth!  
 Had you one sorrow and she shared it not?  
 One burthen and she would not lighten it?  
 One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?

## AYLMER'S FIELD

Or when some heat of difference sparkled  
out,  
How sweetly would she glide between your  
wraths,  
And steal you from each other! for she  
walk'd

Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of love,  
Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee!  
And one—of him I was not bid to speak—  
Was always with her, whom you also knew.  
Him too you loved, for he was worthy love.  
And these had been together from the  
first;

They might have been together till the last.  
Friends, this frail bark of ours, when sorely  
tried,

May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,  
Without the captain's knowledge: hope  
with me.

Whose shame is that, if he went hence with  
shame?

Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these  
I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,  
"My house is left unto me desolate."

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept;  
but some,  
Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than  
those

That knit themselves for summer shadow,  
scowl'd

At their great lord. He, when it seem'd he  
saw

No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but  
fork'd

Of the near storm, and aiming at his head,  
Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldier-  
like,

Erect: but when the preacher's cadence  
flow'd

Softening thro' all the gentle attributes  
Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd his  
face,

Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron mouth;  
And 'O pray God that he hold up' she  
thought

'Or surely I shall shame myself and him.'

'Nor yours the blame—for who beside  
your hearths

Can take her place—if echoing me you cry

"Our house is left unto us desolate"?  
But thou, O thou that killest, hadst thou  
known,

O thou that stonest, hadst thou understood  
The things belonging to thy peace and  
ours!

Is there no prophet but the voice that calls  
Doom upon kings, or in the waste "Re-  
pent"?

Is not our own child on the narrow way,  
Who down to those that saunter in the  
broad

Cries "Come up hither," as a prophet to  
us?

Is there no stoning save with flint and  
rock?

Yes, as the dead we weep for testify—  
No desolation but by sword and fire?

Yes, as your moanings witness, and my-  
self

Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss.  
Give me your prayers, for he is past your  
prayers,

Not past the living fount of pity in Heaven.  
But I that thought myself long-suffering,  
meek,

Exceeding "poor in spirit"—how the words  
Have twisted back upon themselves, and  
mean

Vileness, we are grown so proud—I wish'd  
my voice

A rushing tempest of the wrath of God  
To blow these sacrifices thro' the world—  
Sent like the twelve-divided concubine  
To inflame the tribes: but there—out yon-  
der—earth

Lightsens from her own central Hell—O  
there

The red fruit of an old idolatry—  
The heads of chiefs and princes fall so  
fast,

They cling together in the ghastly sack—  
The land all shambles—naked marriages  
Flash from the bridge, and ever-murder'd  
France,

By shores that darken with the gathering  
wolf,

Runs in a river of blood to the sick sea.

Is this a time to madden madness then?

Was this a time for these to flaunt their  
pride?

## AYLMER'S FIELD

May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as dense as  
     those  
 Which hid the Holiest from the people's  
     eyes  
 Ere the great death, shroud this great sin  
     from all!  
 Doubtless our narrow world must canvass it:  
 O rather pray for those and pity them,  
 Who, thro' their own desire accomplish'd,  
     bring  
 Their own gray hairs with sorrow to the  
     grave—  
 Who broke the bond which they desired to  
     break,  
 Which else had link'd their race with times  
     to come—  
 Who wove coarse webs to snare her purity,  
 Grossly contriving their dear daughter's  
     good—  
 Poor souls, and knew not what they did,  
     but sat  
 Ignorant, devising their own daughter's  
     death!  
 May not that earthly chastisement suffice?  
 Have not our love and reverence left them  
     bare?  
 Will not another take their heritage?  
 Will there be children's laughter in their  
     hall  
 For ever and for ever, or one stone  
 Left on another, or is it a light thing  
 That I, their guest, their host, their ancient  
     friend,  
 I made by these the last of all my race,  
 Must cry to these the last of theirs, as cried  
 Christ ere His agony to those that swore  
 Not by the temple but the gold, and made  
 Their own traditions God, and slew the  
     Lord,  
 And left their memories a world's curse—  
     "Behold,  
 Your house is left unto you desolate"?

Ended he had not, but she brook'd no  
     more:  
 Long since her heart had beat remorse-  
     lessly,  
 Her cramp'd-up sorrow pain'd her, and a  
     sense  
 Of meanness in her unresisting life.

Then their eyes vex'd her; for on entering  
 He had cast the curtains of their seat  
     aside—  
 Black velvet of the costliest—she herself  
 Had seen to that: fain had she closed them  
     now,  
 Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd  
 Her husband inch by inch, but when she  
     laid,  
 Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he veil'd  
 His face with the other, and at once, as falls  
 A creeper when the prop is broken, fell  
 The woman shrieking at his feet, and  
     swoon'd.  
 Then her own people bore along the nave  
 Her pendent hands, and narrow meagre face  
 Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty years:  
 And her the Lord of all the landscape  
     round  
 Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all  
 Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd out  
 Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle  
 Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded ways  
 Stumbling across the market to his death,  
 Unpitied; for he groped as blind, and  
     seem'd  
 Always about to fall, grasping the pews  
 And oaken finials till he touch'd the door;  
 Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot stood,  
 Strode from the porch, tall and erect again.

But nevermore did either pass the gate  
 Save under pall with bearers. In one  
     month,  
 Thro' weary and yet ever wearier hours,  
 The childless mother went to seek her  
     child;  
 And when he felt the silence of his house  
 About him, and the change and not the  
     change,  
 And those fix'd eyes of painted ancestors  
 Staring for ever from their gilded walls  
 On him their last descendant, his own head  
 Began to droop, to fall; the man became  
 Imbecile; his one word was 'desolate';  
 Dead for two years before his death was he;  
 But when the second Christmas came,  
     escaped  
 His keepers, and the silence which he felt,  
 To find a deeper in the narrow gloom  
 By wife and child; nor wanted at his end

## AYLMER'S FIELD

The dark retinue reverencing death  
 At golden thresholds; nor from tender  
 hearts,  
 And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd  
 race,  
 Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.  
 Then the great Hall was wholly broken  
 down,  
 And the broad woodland parcell'd into  
 farms;  
 And where the two contrived their  
 daughter's good,  
 Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made  
 his run,  
 The hedgehog underneath the plantain  
 bores,  
 The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,  
 The slow-worm creeps, and the thin  
 weasel there  
 Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

## SEA DREAMS

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred;  
 His wife, an unknown artist's orphan  
 child—  
 One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three  
 years old:  
 They, thinking that her clear germander  
 eye  
 Droopt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,  
 Came, with a month's leave given them,  
 to the sea:  
 For which his gains were dock'd, however  
 small:  
 Small were his gains, and hard his work;  
 besides,  
 Their slender household fortunes (for the  
 man  
 Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,  
 Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep:  
 And oft, when sitting all alone, his face  
 Would darken, as he cursed his credulous-  
 ness,  
 And that one unctuous mouth which lured  
 him, rogue,  
 To buy strange shares in some Peruvian  
 mine.  
 Now seaward-bound for health they gain'd  
 a coast,  
 All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning cave,

At close of day; slept, woke, and went the  
 next,  
 The Sabbath, pious variers from the  
 church,  
 To chapel; where a heated pulpiteer,  
 Not preaching simple Christ to simple  
 men,  
 Announced the coming doom, and ful-  
 minated  
 Against the scarlet woman and her creed;  
 For sideways up he swung his arms, and  
 shriek'd  
 'Thus, thus with violence,' ev'n as if he  
 held  
 The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself  
 Were that great Angel; 'Thus with violence  
 Shall Babylon be cast into the sea;  
 Then comes the close.' The gentle-hearted  
 wife  
 Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world;  
 He at his own: but when the wordy storm  
 Had ended, forth they came and paced the  
 shore,  
 Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,  
 Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce  
 believed  
 (The sootflake of so many a summer still  
 Clung to their fancies) that they saw, the  
 sea.  
 So now on sand they walk'd, and now on  
 cliff,  
 Lingering about the thymy promontories,  
 Till all the sails were darken'd in the west,  
 And rosed in the east: then homeward and  
 to bed:  
 Where she, who kept a tender Christian  
 hope,  
 Haunting a holy text, and still to that  
 Returning, as the bird returns, at night,  
 'Let not the sun go down upon your  
 wrath,'  
 Said, 'Love, forgive him:' but he did not  
 speak;  
 And silenced by that silence lay the wife,  
 Remembering her dear Lord who died for  
 all,  
 And musing on the little lives of men,  
 And how they mar this little by their feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full  
 tide



## SEA DREAMS

Rose with ground-swell, which, on the  
foremost rocks  
Touching, upjetted in spirits of wild sea-  
smoke,  
And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and  
fell  
In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon  
Dead claps of thunder from within the  
cliffs  
Heard thro' the living roar. At this the  
babe,  
Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd  
and woke  
The mother, and the father suddenly cried,  
'A wreck, a wreck!' then turn'd, and groan-  
ing said,  
    'Forgive! How many will say, "forgive,"  
    and find  
A sort of absolution in the sound  
To hate a little longer! No; the sin  
That neither God nor man can well forgive,  
Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.  
Is it so true that second thoughts are best?  
Not first, and third, which are a riper first?  
Too ripe, too late! they come too late for  
use.  
Ah love, there surely lives in man and  
beast  
Something divine to warn them of their  
foes:  
And such a sense, when first I fronted him,  
Said, "Trust him not;" but after, when  
I came  
To know him more, I lost it, knew him  
less;  
Fought with what seem'd my own un-  
charity;  
Sat at his table; drank his costly wines;  
Made more and more allowance for his  
talk;  
Went further, fool! and trusted him with  
all,  
All my poor scrapings from a dozen years  
Of dust and deskwork: there is no such  
mine,  
None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,  
Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea roars  
Ruin: a fearful night!

'Not fearful; fair,'  
Said the good wife, 'if every star in heaven

Can make it fair: you do but hear the tide.  
Had you ill dreams?'

'O yes,' he said, 'I dream'd  
Of such a tide swelling toward the land,  
And I from out the boundless outer deep  
Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one  
Of those dark caves that run beneath the  
cliffs.

I thought the motion of the boundless deep  
Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved  
upon it  
In darkness: then I saw one lovely star  
Larger and larger. "What a world," I  
thought,  
"To live in!" but in moving on I found  
Only the landward exit of the cave,  
Bright with the sun upon the stream  
beyond:

And near the light a giant woman sat,  
All over earthy, like a piece of earth,  
A pickaxe in her hand: then out I slipt  
Into a land all sun and blossom, trees  
As high as heaven, and every bird that  
sings:  
And here the night-light flickering in my  
eyes  
Awoke me.'

'That was then your dream,' she said,  
'Not sad, but sweet.'

'So sweet, I lay,' said he,  
'And mused upon it, drifting up the stream  
In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced  
The broken vision; for I dream'd that still  
The motion of the great deep bore me on,  
And that the woman walk'd upon the  
brink:  
I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her  
of it:  
"It came," she said, "by working in the  
mines:"

O then to ask her of my shares, I thought;  
And ask'd; but not a word; she shook her  
head.

And then the motion of the current ceased,  
And there was rolling thunder; and we  
reach'd

A mountain, like a wall of burs and thorns;  
But she with her strong feet up the steep  
hill

## SEA DREAMS

Trod out a path: I follow'd; and at top  
She pointed seaward: there a fleet of glass,  
That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,  
Sailing along before a gloomy cloud  
That not one moment ceased to thunder,  
past

In sunshine: right across its track there lay,  
Down in the water, a long reef of gold,  
Or what seem'd gold: and I was glad at  
first

To think that in our often-ransack'd world  
Still so much gold was left; and then I  
fear'd

Lest the gay navy there should splinter  
on it,  
And fearing waved my arm to warn them  
off;

An idle signal, for the brittle fleet  
(I thought I could have died to save it)  
near'd,

Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and vanish'd,  
and I woke,

I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see  
My dream was Life; the woman honest  
Work;

And my poor venture but a fleet of glass  
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold.'

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to comfort him,  
'You raised your arm, you tumbled down  
and broke

The glass with little Margaret's medicine  
in it;

And, breaking that, you made and broke  
your dream:

A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks.'

'No trifle,' groan'd the husband; 'yester-  
day

I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd  
That which I ask'd the woman in my  
dream.

Like her, he shook his head. "Show me the  
books!"

He dodged me with a long and loose  
account.

"The books, the books!" but he, he could  
not wait,

Bound on a matter he of life and death:  
When the great Books (see Daniel seven  
and ten)

Were open'd, I should find he meant me  
well;

And then began to bloat himself, and ooze  
All over with the fat affectionate smile

That makes the widow lean. "My dearest  
friend,

Have faith, have faith! We live by faith,"  
said he;

"And all things work together for the good  
Of those"—it makes me sick to quote him  
—last

Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-  
you went.

I stood like one that had received a blow:  
I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,  
A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,  
A curse in his God-bless-you: then my  
eyes

Pursued him down the street, and far away,  
Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,  
Read rascal in the motions of his back,  
And scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee.'

'Was he so bound, poor soul?' said the  
good wife;

'So are we all: but do not call him, love,  
Before you prove him, rogue, and proved,  
forgive.

His gain is loss; for he that wrongs his  
friend

Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about  
A silent court of justice in his breast,  
Himself the judge and jury, and himself  
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd:  
And that drags down his life: then comes  
what comes

Hereafter: and he meant, he said he meant,  
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you  
well.'

"With all his conscience and one eye  
askew"—

Love, let me quote these lines, that you  
may learn

A man is likewise counsel for himself,  
Too often, in that silent court of yours—

"With all his conscience and one eye  
askew,

So false, he partly took himself for true;  
Whose pious talk, when most his heart  
was dry,

## SEA DREAMS

Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his  
eye;  
Who, never naming God except for gain,  
So never took that useful name in vain,  
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross his  
tool,  
And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and  
fool;  
Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he  
forged,  
And snake-like slimed his victim ere he  
gorged;  
And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the rest  
Arising, did his holy oily best,  
Dropping the too rough H in Hell and  
Heaven,  
To spread the Word by which himself had  
thriven."  
How like you this old satire?"

'Nay,' she said,  
'I loathe it: he had never kindly heart,  
Nor ever cared to better his own kind,  
Who first wrote satire, with no pity in it.  
But will you hear *my* dream, for I had one  
That altogether went to music? Still  
It awed me.'

Then she told it, having dream'd  
Of that same coast.

—But round the North, a light,  
A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapour, lay,  
And ever in it a low musical note  
Swell'd up and died; and, as it swell'd, a  
ridge  
Of breaker issued from the belt, and still  
Grew with the growing note, and when  
the note  
Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on those  
cliffs  
Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as  
that  
Living within the belt) whereby she saw  
That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no  
more,  
But huge cathedral fronts of every age,  
Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,  
One after one: and then the great ridge  
drew,  
Lessening to the lessening music, back,

And past into the belt and swell'd again  
Slowly to music: ever when it broke  
The statues, king or saint, or founder  
fell;  
Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin  
left  
Came men and women in dark clusters  
round,  
Some crying, 'Set them up! they shall not  
fall!'  
And others, 'Let them lie, for they have  
fall'n.'  
And still they strove and wrangled: and  
she grieved  
In her strange dream, she knew not why,  
to find  
Their wildest wailings never out of tune  
With that sweet note; and ever as their  
shrieks  
Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave  
Returning, while none mark'd it, on the  
crowd  
Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd  
their eyes  
Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept  
away  
The men of flesh and blood, and men of  
stone,  
To the waste deeps together.

'Then I fixt  
My wistful eyes on two fair images,  
Both crown'd with stars and high among  
the stars,—  
The Virgin Mother standing with her child  
Iligh up on one of those dark minster-  
fronts—  
Till she began to totter, and the child  
Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry  
Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I  
woke,  
And my dream awed me:—well—but what  
are dreams?  
Yours came but from the breaking of a  
glass,  
And mine but from the crying of a child.'

'Child? No!' said he, 'but this tide's  
roar, and his,  
Our Boanerges with his threats of doom,  
And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms

## SEA DREAMS

(Altho' I grant but little music there)  
Went both to make your dream: but if  
there were

A music harmonizing our wild cries,  
Sphere-music such as that you dream'd  
about,

Why, that would make our passions far too  
like

The discords dear to the musician. No—  
One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns  
of heaven:

True Devils with no ear, they howl in tune  
With nothing but the Devil!

“True” indeed!

One of our town, but later by an hour  
Here than ourselves, spoke with me on the  
shore;

While you were running down the sands,  
and made

The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbelow  
flap,

Good man, to please the child. She brought  
strange news.

Why were you silent when I spoke to-  
night?

I had set my heart on your forgiving him  
Before you knew. We *must* forgive the  
dead.'

‘Dead! who is dead?’

‘The man your eye pursued.

A little after you had parted with him,  
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-disease.’

‘Dead? he? of heart-disease? what heart  
had he  
To die of? dead!’

‘Ah, dearest, if there be

A devil in man, there is an angel too,  
And if he did that wrong you charge him  
with,

His angel broke his heart. But your rough  
voice

(You spoke so loud) has roused the child  
again.

Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not sleep

Without her “little birdie”? well then,  
sleep,  
And I will sing you “birdie.” ’

Saying this,

The woman half turn'd round from him  
she loved,

I left him one hand, and reaching thro' the  
night

Her other, found (for it was close beside)  
And half-embraced the basket cradle-head  
With one soft arm, which, like the pliant  
bough

That moving moves the nest and nestling,  
sway'd

The cradle, while she sang this baby song.

What does little birdie say  
In her nest at peep of day?  
Let me fly, says little birdie,  
Mother, let me fly away.  
Birdie, rest a little longer,  
Till the little wings are stronger.  
So she rests a little longer,  
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,  
In her bed at peep of day?  
Baby says, like little birdie,  
Let me rise and fly away.  
Baby, sleep a little longer,  
Till the little limbs are stronger.  
If she sleeps a little longer,  
Baby too shall fly away.

‘She sleeps: let us too, let all evil, sleep.  
He also sleeps—another sleep than ours.  
He can do no more wrong: forgive him,  
dear,  
And I shall sleep the sounder!’

Then the man,

‘His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to come.  
Yet let your sleep for this one night be  
sound:

I do forgive him!’

‘Thanks, my love,’ she said,  
‘Your own will be the sweeter,’ and they  
slept.

## LUCRETIUS

### LUCRETIUS

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found  
Her master cold; for when the morning  
flush

Of passion and the first embrace had died  
Between them, tho' he lov'd her none the  
less,

Yet often when the woman heard his foot  
Return from paces in the field, and ran  
To greet him with a kiss, the master took  
Small notice, or austere, for—his mind  
Half buried in some weightier argument,  
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise  
And long roll of the Hexameter—he past  
To turn and ponder those three hundred  
scrolls

Left by the Teacher, whom he held divine.  
She brook'd it not; but wrathful, petulant,  
Dreaming some rival, sought and found a  
witch

Who brew'd the philtre which had power,  
they said,

To lead an errant passion home again.

And this, at times, she mingled with his  
drink,

And this destroy'd him; for the wicked broth  
Confused the chemic labour of the blood,  
And tickling the brute brain within the  
man's

Made havock among those tender cells, and  
check'd

His power to shape: he loathed himself;  
and once

After a tempest woke upon a morn

That mock'd him with returning calm, and  
cried:

'Storm in the night! for thrice I heard  
the rain

Rushing; and once the flash of a thunder-  
bolt—

Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—  
Struck out the streaming mountain-side,  
and show'd

A riotous confluence of watercourses  
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,  
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

'Storm, and what dreams, ye holy Gods,  
what dreams!

For thrice I waken'd after dreams. Per-  
chance

We do but recollect the dreams that come  
Just ere the waking: terrible! for it seem'd  
A void was made in Nature; all her bonds  
Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-  
streams

And torrents of her myriad universe,  
Ruining along the illimitable inane,  
Fly on to clash together again, and make  
Another and another frame of things  
For ever: that was mine, my dream, I  
knew it—

Of and belonging to me, as the dog  
With inward yelp and restless forefoot  
plies

His function of the woodland: but the next!  
I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed  
Came driving rainlike down again on earth,  
And where it dash'd the reddening  
meadow, sprang

No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,  
For these I thought my dream would show  
to me,

But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,  
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made  
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies  
worse

Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.  
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and round  
me drove

In narrowing circles till I yell'd again  
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw—  
Was it the first beam of my latest day?

'Then, then, from utter gloom stood out  
the breasts,

The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a  
sword

Now over and now under, now direct,  
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down  
shamed

At all that beauty; and as I stared, a fire,  
The fire that left a roofless Iliion,  
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that I  
woke.

'Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus, thine,  
Because I would not one of thine own  
doves,

Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee? thine,

## LUCRETII

Forgetful how my rich procœmion makes  
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,  
In lays that will outlast thy Deity?

'Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My tongue  
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of these  
Angers thee most, or angers thee at all?  
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof  
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and  
scorn,  
Live the great life which all our greatest  
fain  
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.

'Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like  
ourselves  
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry  
to thee  
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms  
Round him, and keep him from the lust of  
blood  
That makes a steaming slaughter-house of  
Rome.

'Ay, but I meant not thee; I meant not  
her,  
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see  
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and  
tempt  
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were  
abroad;  
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter wept  
Her Deity false in human-amorous tears;  
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter  
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,  
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called  
Calliope to grace his golden verse—  
Ay, and this Kypris also—did I take  
That popular name of thine to shadow forth  
The all-generating powers and genial heat  
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the thick  
blood  
Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs are  
glad  
Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird  
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of  
flowers:  
Which things appear the work of mighty  
Gods.

'The Gods! and if I go my work is left  
Unfinish'd—if I go. The Gods, who haunt

The lucid interspace of world and world,  
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a  
wind,

Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,  
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,  
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar  
Their sacred everlasting calm! and such,  
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,  
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain  
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the  
Gods!

If all be atoms, how then should the Gods  
Being atomic not be dissoluble,  
Not follow the great law? My master held  
That Gods there are, for all men so believe.  
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant  
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train  
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof  
That Gods there are, and deathless.

Meant? I meant?  
I have forgotten what I meant: my mind  
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

'Look where another of our Gods, the  
Sun,  
Apollo, Delius, or of older use  
All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—  
Has mounted yonder; since he never  
sware,  
Except his wrath were wreak'd on wretched  
man,  
That he would only shine among the dead  
Hereafter; tales! for never yet on earth  
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roast-  
ing ox  
Moan round the spit—nor knows he what  
he sees;  
King of the East altho' he seem, and girt  
With song and flame and fragrance, slowly  
lifts  
His golden feet on those empurpled stairs  
That climb into the windy halls of heaven:  
And here he glances on an eye new-born,  
And gets for greeting but a wail of pain;  
And here he stays upon a freezing orb  
That fain would gaze upon him to the last;  
And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n  
And closed by those who mourn a friend  
in vain,  
Not thankful that his troubles are no more.  
And me, altho' his fire is on my face

## LUCRETIUS

Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell  
Whether I mean this day to end myself,  
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,  
That men like soldiers may not quit the  
post

Allotted by the Gods: but he that holds  
The Gods are careless, wherefore need he  
care

Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at  
once,

Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and  
sink

Past earthquake—ay, and gout and stone,  
that break

Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-  
life,

And wretched age—and worst disease of  
all,

These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,  
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,  
Abominable, strangers at my hearth

Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,  
The phantom husks of something foully  
done,

And fleeting thro' the boundless uni-  
verse,

And blasting the long quiet of my breast  
With animal heat and dire insanity?

'How should the mind, except it loved  
them, clasp

These idols to herself? or do they fly  
Now thinner, and now thicker, like the  
flakes

In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce  
Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour  
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear  
The keepers down, and throng, their rags  
and they

The basest, far into that council-hall  
Where sit the best and stateliest of the  
land?

'Can I not fling this horror off me again,  
Seeing with how great ease Nature can  
smile,

Balmier and nobler from her bath of storm,  
At random ravage? and how easily  
The mountain there has cast his cloudy  
slough,

Now towering o'er him in serenest air,

A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay, and  
within

All hollow as the hopes and fears of men?

'But who was he, that in the garden  
snared

Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale  
To laugh at—more to laugh at in myself—  
For look! what is it? there? yon arbutus  
Totters; a noiseless riot underneath  
Strikes through the wood, sets all the tops  
quivering—

The mountain quickens into Nymph and  
Faun;

And here an Oread—how the sun delights  
To glance and shift about her slippery  
sides,

And rosy knees and supple roundedness,  
And budded bosom-peaks—who this way  
runs

Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see,  
Follows; but him I proved impossible;  
Twy-natured is no nature: yet he draws  
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now  
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind  
That ever butted his rough brother-brute  
For lust or lusty blood or provender:  
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and she  
Loathes him as well; such a precipitate  
heel,

Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle-  
wing,

Whirls her to me: but will she fling herself,  
Shameless upon me? Catch her, goat-foot:  
nay,

Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wilder-  
ness,

And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide! do I  
wish—

What?—that the bush were leafless? or to  
whelm

All of them in one massacre? O ye Gods,  
I know you careless, yet, behold, to you  
From childly wont and ancient use I call—  
I thought I lived securely as yourselves—  
No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-  
spite,

No madness of ambition, avarice, none:  
No larger feast than under plane or pine  
With neighbours laid along the grass, to  
take

## LUCRETIUS

Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,  
 Affirming each his own philosophy—  
 Nothing to mar the sober majesties  
 Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.  
 But now it seems some unseen monster lays  
 His vast and filthy hands upon my will,  
 Wrenching it backward into his; and spoils  
 My bliss in being; and it ~~was~~ not great;  
 For save when shutting reasons up in  
 rhythm,  
 Or Heliconian honey in living words,  
 To make a truth less harsh, I often grew  
 Tired of so much within our little life,  
 Or of so little in our little life—  
 Poor little life that toddles half an hour  
 Crown'd with a flower or two, and there  
 an end—  
 And since the nobler pleasure seems to  
 fade,  
 Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,  
 Not manlike end myself?—our privilege—  
 What beast has heart to do it? And what  
 man,  
 What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph  
 thus?  
 Not I; not he, who bears one name with  
 her  
 Whose death-blow struck the dateless  
 doom of kings,  
 When, brooking not the Tarquin in her  
 veins,  
 She made her blood in sight of Collatine  
 And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,  
 Spout from the maiden fountain in her  
 heart.  
 And from it sprang the Commonwealth,  
 which breaks  
 As I am breaking now!

‘And therefore now

Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,  
 Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart  
 Those blind beginnings that have made  
 me man,  
 Dash them anew together at her will  
 Thro' all her cycles—into man once more,

Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower:  
 But till this cosmic order everywhere  
 Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day  
 Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour per-  
 haps  
 Is not so far when momentary man  
 Shall seem no more a something to himself,  
 But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and  
 fanes,  
 And even his bones long laid within the  
 grave,  
 The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,  
 Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,  
 Into the unseen for ever,—till that hour,  
 My golden work in which I told a truth  
 That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,  
 And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake, and  
 plucks  
 The mortal soul from out immortal hell,  
 Shall stand: ay, surely: then it fails at last  
 And perishes as I must; for O Thou,  
 Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,  
 Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,  
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou art  
 Without one pleasure and without one  
 pain,  
 Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine  
 Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus  
 I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not  
 How roughly men may woo thee so they  
 win—  
 Thus—thus: the soul flies out and dies in  
 the air.'

With that he drove the knife into his  
 side:  
 She heard him, raging, heard him fall;  
 ran in,  
 Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon her-  
 self  
 As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd  
 That she but meant to win him back, fell  
 on him,  
 Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd: he answer'd,  
 'Care not thou!  
 Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee well!'



# THE PRINCESS

## A MEDLEY

### PROLOGUE

SIR Walter Vivian all a summer's day  
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun  
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon  
His tenants, wife and child, and thither  
half  
The neighbouring borough with their  
Institute  
Of which he was the patron. I was there  
From college, visiting the son,—the son  
A Walter too,—with others of our set,  
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the  
house,  
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the  
hall  
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than  
their names,  
Grew side by side; and on the pavement  
lay  
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the  
park,  
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of  
Time;  
And on the tables every clime and age  
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,  
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans  
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-  
clubs  
From the isles of palm: and higher on the  
walls,  
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and  
deer,  
His own forefathers' arms and armour  
hung.

And 'this' he said 'was Hugh's at Agin-  
court;  
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:  
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle  
With all about him'—which he brought,  
and I  
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with  
knights,

Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings  
Who laid about them at their wills and  
died;  
And mixt with these, a lady, one that  
arm'd  
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the  
gate,  
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her  
walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the book,  
'O noble heart who, being strait-besieged  
By this wild king to force her to his wish,  
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a  
soldier's death,  
But now when all was lost or seem'd as  
lost—  
Her stature more than mortal in the burst  
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—  
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the  
gate,  
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,  
She trampled some beneath her horses'  
heels,  
And some were whelm'd with missiles of  
the wall,  
And some were push'd with lances from  
the rock,  
And part were drown'd within the whirling  
brook:  
O miracle of noble womanhood!'

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;  
And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he said,  
'To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth  
And sister Lilia with the rest.' We went  
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)  
Down thro' the park: strange was the sight  
to me;  
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown  
With happy faces and with holiday.  
There moved the multitude, a thousand  
heads:  
The patient leaders of their Institute  
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font  
of stone  
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

The fountain of the moment, playing, now  
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball  
Danced like a wisp: and somewhat lower  
down

A man with knobs and wires and vials fired  
A cannon: Echo answer'd in her sleep  
From hollow fields: and ~~here~~ were tele-  
scopes

For azure views; and there a group of girls  
In circle waited, whom the electric shock  
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter: round  
the lake

A little clock-work steamer paddling plied  
And shook the lilies: perch'd about the  
knolls

A dozen angry models jetted steam:  
A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon  
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves  
And dropt a fairy parachute and past:  
And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph  
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
Between the mimic stations; so that sport  
Went hand in hand with Science; other-  
where

Pure sport: a herd of boys with clamour  
bowl'd

And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd  
about

Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men and  
maids

Arranged a country dance, and flew thro'  
light

And shadow, while the twangling violin  
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and over-  
head

The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime  
Made noise with bees and breeze from end  
to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of  
the time;

And long we gazed, but satiated at length  
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-  
claspt,

Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,  
Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost  
they gave

The park, the crowd, the house; but all  
within

The sward was trim as any garden lawn:

And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends  
From neighbour seats: and there was  
Ralph himself,

A broken statue propt against the wall,  
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
Half child half woman as she was, had  
wound

A scarf of orange round the stony helm,  
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
That made the old warrior from his ivied  
nook

Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb a feast  
Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,  
And there we join'd them: then the maiden  
Aunt

Took this fair day for text, and from it  
preach'd

An universal culture for the crowd,  
And all things great; but we, unworthier,  
told

Of college: he had climb'd across the  
spikes,

And he had squeezed himself betwixt the  
bars,

And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs;  
and one

Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,  
But honeying at the whisper of a lord;  
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain  
Vencer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads

I saw

The feudal warrior lady-clad; which brought  
My book to mind: and opening this I read  
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang  
With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her  
That drove her foes with slaughter from  
her walls,

And much I praised her nobleness, and  
'Where,'

Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay  
Beside him) 'lives there such a woman  
now?'

Quick answer'd Lilia 'There are thou-  
sands now

Such women, but convention beats them  
down:

It is but bringing up; no more than that:

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

You men have done it: how I hate you all!  
Ah, were I something great! I wish I were  
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you  
then,  
That love to keep us children! O I wish  
That I were some great princess, I would  
build  
Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are  
taught;  
We are twice as quick!' And here she shook  
aside  
The hand that play'd the patron with her  
curls.

And one said smiling 'Pretty were the  
sight  
If our old halls could change their sex, and  
flaunt  
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for  
deans,  
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden  
hair.  
I think they should not wear our rusty  
gowns,  
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or  
Ralph  
Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,  
If there were many Lilies in the brood,  
However deep you might embower the nest,  
Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sward  
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:  
'That's your light way; but I would make  
it death  
For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at her self she  
laugh'd;  
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
And sweet as English air could make her,  
she:  
But Walter hail'd a score of names upon  
her,  
And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful Puss,'  
And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,  
All else was well, for she-society.  
They boated and they cricketed; they talk'd  
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;  
They lost their weeks; they vex'd the souls  
of deans;

They rode; they betted; made a hundred  
friends,  
And caught the blossom of the flying  
terms,  
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,  
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he  
spoke,  
Part banter, part affection.  
'True,' she said,  
'We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us  
much.  
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did.'

She held it out; and as a parrot turns  
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
And takes a lady's finger with all care,  
And bites it for true heart and not for harm,  
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd  
And wrung it. 'Doubt my word again!' he  
said.

'Come, listen! here is proof that you were  
miss'd:

We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read;  
And there we took one tutor as to read:  
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and  
square

Were out of season: never man, I think,  
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he:  
For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,  
And our long walks were stript as bare as  
brooms,

We did but talk you over, pledge you all  
In wassail; often, like as many girls—  
Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—  
As many little trifling Lilies—play'd  
Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,  
And *what's my thought* and *when* and *where*  
and *how*,  
And often told a tale from mouth to mouth  
As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that:  
A pleasant game, she thought: she liked it  
more  
Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.  
But these—what kind of tales did men tell  
men,  
She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain  
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips:  
And Walter nodded at me; 'He began,  
The rest would follow, each in turn; and so

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

We forged a sevenfold story. Kind? what kind?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,  
Seven-headed monsters only made to kill  
'Time by the fire in winter.'

'Kill him now,  
The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,'  
Said Lilia; 'Why not now? the maiden  
Aunt.

'Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?  
A tale for summer as befits the time,  
And something it should be to suit the  
place,  
Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
Grave, solemn!'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this  
To something so mock-solemn, that I  
laugh'd

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling  
mirth

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,  
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt  
(A little sense of wrong had touch'd her  
face

With colour) turn'd to me with 'As you  
will;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' clamour'd  
he,

'And make her some great Princess, six  
feet high,  
Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you  
The Prince to win her!'

'Then follow me, the Prince,'  
I answer'd, 'each be hero in his turn!  
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a  
dream.—

Heroic seems our Princess as required—  
But something made to suit with Time  
and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,  
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,  
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experi-  
ments

For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt  
them all—

This *were* a medley! we should have him  
back

Who told the "Winter's tale" to do it for us.  
No matter: we will say whatever comes.  
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,  
From time to time, some ballad or a song  
To give us breathing-space.'

So I began,  
And the rest follow'd: and the women sang  
Between the rougher voices of the men,  
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:  
And here I give the story and the songs.

### I

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,  
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,  
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,  
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our  
house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire  
burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,  
Dying, that none of all our blood should  
know

The shadow from the substance, and that  
one

Should come to fight with shadows and to  
fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran.  
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or  
less,

An old and strange affection of the house.  
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven  
knows what:

On a sudden in the midst of men and day,  
And while I walk'd and talk'd as hereto-  
fore,

I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,  
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.

Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head  
cane,

And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd 'cata-  
lepsy.'

My mother pitying made a thousand  
prayers;

My mother was as mild as any saint,  
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,

So gracious was her tact and tenderness:  
But my good father thought a king a king;

He cared not for the affection of the house;  
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

To lash offence, and with long arms and hands  
Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass  
For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,  
While life was yet in bud and blade,  
betroth'd

To one, a neighbouring Princess: she to me  
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf  
At eight years old; and still from time to time

Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,

And of her brethren, youths of puissance;  
And still I wore her picture by my heart,  
And one dark tress; and all around them both

Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about  
their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I  
should wed,  
My father sent ambassadors with furs  
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these  
brought back

A present, a great labour of the loom;  
And therewithal an answer vague as wind:  
Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;  
He said there was a compact; that was true:  
But then she had a will; was he to blame?  
And maiden fancies; loved to live alone  
Among her women; certain, would not  
wed.

That morning in the presence room I  
stood  
With Cyril and with Florian, my two  
friends:

The first, a gentleman of broken means  
(His father's fault) but given to starts and  
bursts

Of revel; and the last, my other heart,  
And almost my half-self, for still we moved  
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's  
face  
Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,  
Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,  
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and  
rent

The wonder of the loom thro' warp and  
woof

From skirt to skirt; and at the last he swore  
That he would send a hundred thousand  
men,

And bring her in a whirlwind: then he  
chew'd

The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd  
his spleen,

Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. 'My father, let me go.

It cannot be but some gross error lies

In this report, this answer of a king,

Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:

Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,

Whate'er my grief to find her less than  
fame,

May rue the bargain made.' And Florian  
said:

'I have a sister at the foreign court,  
Who moves about the Princess; she, you  
know,

Who wedded with a nobleman from thence:

He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,

The lady of three castles in that land:

Thro' her this matter might be sifted  
clean.'

And Cyril whisper'd: 'Take me with you  
too.'

Then laughing 'what, if these weird  
seizures come

Upon you in those lands, and no one near  
To point you out the shadow from the  
truth!

Take me: I'll serve you better in a strait;  
I grate on rusty hinges here:' but 'No!

Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not; we  
ourselves

Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead  
In iron gauntlets: break the council up.'

But when the council broke, I rose and  
past

Thro' the wild woods that hung about the  
town;

Found a still place, and pluck'd her like-  
ness out;

Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying  
bathed

In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees:

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

What were those fancies? wherefore break  
her troth?

Proud look'd the lips: but while I meditated

A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,  
And shook the songs, the whispers, and  
the shrieks

Of the wild woods together, and a Voice  
Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou shalt  
win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month  
Became her golden shield, I stole from  
court

With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,  
Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread  
To hear my father's clamour at our backs  
With Ho! from some bay-window shake  
the night;

But all was quiet: from the bastion'd walls  
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we  
dropt,

And flying reach'd the frontier: then we  
crost

To a livelier land; and so by tilth and  
grange,

And vines, and blowing bosks of wilder-  
ness,

We gain'd the mother-city thick with  
towers,

And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and small  
his voice,

But bland the smile that like a wrinkling  
wind

On glassy water drove his cheek in lines;

A little dry old man, without a star,

Not like a king: three days he feasted us,

And on the fourth I spake of why we came,

And my betroth'd. 'You do us, Prince,' he  
said,

Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,

'All honour. We remember love ourselves

In our sweet youth: there did a compact pass

Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—

I think the year in which our olives fail'd.

I would you had her, Prince, with all my  
heart,

With my full heart: but there were widows  
here,

Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;  
They fed her theories, in and out of place  
Maintaining that with equal husbandry  
The woman were an equal to the man.

They harp'd on this; with this our ban-  
quets rang;

Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of  
talk;

Nothing but this; my very ears were hot  
To hear them: knowledge, so my daughter  
held,

Was all in all: they had but been, she  
thought,

As children; they must lose the child,  
assume

The woman: then, Sir, awful odes she  
wrote,

Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,  
But all she is and does is awful; odes

About this losing of the child; and rhymes  
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change

Beyond all reason: these the women sang;  
And they that know such things—I sought  
but peace;

No critic I—would call them masterpieces:  
They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a  
boon,

A certain summer-palace which I have  
Hard by your father's frontier: I said no,

Yet being an easy man, gave it: and there,  
All wild to found an University

For maidens, on the spur she fled; and  
more

We know not,—only this: they see no men,  
Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins  
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon  
her

As on a kind of paragon; and I  
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to  
breed

Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but  
since

(And I confess with right) you think me  
bound

In some sort, I can give you letters to her;  
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your  
chance

Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king;

And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur  
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets  
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)  
Went forth again with both my friends.

We rode

Many a long league back to the North.

At last

From hills, that look'd across a land of  
hope,

We dropt with evening on a rustic town

Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,

Close at the boundary of the liberties;

There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine  
host

To council, plied him with his richest  
wines,

And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared  
As blank as death in marble; then ex-  
claim'd

Averring it was clear against all rules

For any man to go: but as his brain

Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he said,

'Had given us letters, was he bound to  
speak?

The king would bear him out;' and at the  
last—

The summer of the vine in all his veins—

'No doubt that we might make it worth his  
while.

She once had past that way; he heard her  
speak;

She scared him; life! he never saw the like;

She look'd as grand as doomsday and as  
grave:

And he, he revered his liege-lady there;

He always made a point to post with mares;

His daughter and his housemaid were the  
boys:

The land, he understood, for miles about

Was till'd by women; all the swine were  
sows,

And all the dogs'—

But while he jested thus,  
A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed

in act,

Remembering how we three presented

Maid

Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of  
feast,

In masque or pageant at my father's court.

We sent mine host to purchase female gear;

He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake

The midriff of despair with laughter, help

To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes

We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe

To guerdon silence, mounted our good  
steeds,

And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,

And rode till midnight when the college  
lights

Began to glitter firefly-like in copse

And linden alley: then we past an arch,

Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings

From four wing'd horses dark against the  
stars;

And some inscription ran along the front,

But deep in shadow: further on we gain'd

A little street half garden and half house;  
But scarce could hear each other speak for  
noise

Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers  
falling

On silver anvils, and the splash and stir

Of fountains spouted up and showering  
down

In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:

And all about us peal'd the nightingale,

Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,

By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven  
and Earth

With constellation and with continent,

Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;

A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable  
wench

Came running at the call, and help'd us  
down.

Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and  
sail'd,

Full-blown, before us into rooms which  
gave

Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost

In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,

And who were tutors. 'Lady Blanche' she  
said,

'And Lady Psyche.' 'Which was prettiest,  
Best-natured?' 'Lady Psyche.' 'Hers are  
we,'

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

One voice, we cried; and I sat down and wrote,  
In such a hand as when a field of corn  
Bows all its ears before the roaring East;

'Three ladies of the Northern empire pray  
Your Highness would enroll them with  
your own,  
As Lady Psyche's pupils.'

This I seal'd:  
The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,  
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes:  
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;  
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd  
To float about a glimmering night, and watch  
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell  
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

### II

As thro' the land at eve we went,  
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
We fell out, my wife and I,  
O we fell out I know not why,  
And kiss'd again with tears.  
And blessings on the falling out  
'That all the more endears,  
When we fall out with those we love  
And kiss again with tears!  
For when we came where lies the child  
We lost in other years,  
There above the little grave,  
O there above the little grave,  
We kiss'd again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress came:  
She brought us Academic silks, in huc  
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,  
And zoned with gold; and now when these  
were on,  
And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,  
She, curtsying her obeisance, let us know  
The Princess Ida waited: out we paced,  
I first, and following thro' the porch that sang  
All round with laurel, issued in a court  
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths  
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay

Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.  
The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,  
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst;  
And here and there on lattice edges lay  
Or book or lute; but hastily we past,  
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,  
With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne,  
All beauty compass'd in a female form,  
The Princess; liker to the inhabitant  
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,  
'Than our man's earth; such eyes were in her head,  
And so much grace and power, breathing down  
From over her arch'd brows, with every turn  
Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,  
And to her feet. She rose her height, and said:

'We give you welcome: not without re-  
dound  
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime,  
And that full voice which circles round the grave,  
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.  
What! are the ladies of your land so tall?'  
'We of the court' said Cyril. 'From the court'  
She answer'd, 'then ye know the Prince?'  
and he:  
'The climax of his age! as tho' there were  
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,  
He worships your ideal.' she replied:  
'We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear  
This barren verbiage, current among men,  
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.  
Your flight from out your bookless wilds  
would seem  
As arguing love of knowledge and of power;  
Your language proves you still the child.  
Indeed,



## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

We dream not of him: when we set our hand  
To this great work, we purposed with ourself  
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling  
The tricks, which make us toys of men,  
that so,  
Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
You may with those self-styled our lords ally  
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with  
scale.'

At those high words, we conscious of  
ourselves,  
Perused the matting; then an officer  
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as  
these:  
Not for three years to correspond with  
home;  
Not for three years to cross the liberties;  
Not for three years to speak with any men;  
And many more, which hastily subscribed,  
We enter'd on the boards: and 'Now,' she  
cried,  
'Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look,  
our hall!  
Our statues!—not of those that men desire,  
Sleek Odalises, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but  
she  
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and  
she  
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene  
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman  
brows  
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose  
Convention, since to look on noble forms  
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism  
That which is higher. O lift your natures  
up:  
Embrace our aims: work out your freedom.  
Girls,  
Knowledge is now no more a fountain  
seal'd:  
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,  
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite

And slander, die. Better not be at all  
Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go:  
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue  
The fresh arrivals of the week before;  
For they press in from all the provinces,  
And fill the hive.'

She spoke, and bowing waved  
Dismissal: back again we crost the court  
To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in,  
There sat along the forms, like morning  
doves

That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,  
A patient range of pupils; she herself  
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,  
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-  
eyed,

And on the hither side, or so she look'd,  
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,  
In shining draperies, headed like a star,  
Her maiden babe, a double April old,  
Agläa slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:  
Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame  
That whisper'd 'Asses' ears,' among the  
sedg,  
'My sister.' 'Comely, too, by all that's fair,'  
Said Cyril. 'O hush, hush!' and she began.

'This world was once a fluid haze of  
light,  
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,  
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast  
The planets: then the monster, then the  
man;  
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,  
Raw from the prime, and crushing down  
his mate;  
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here  
Among the lowest.'

Thereupon she took  
A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious  
past;  
Glanced at the legendary Amazon  
As emblematic of a nobler age;  
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of  
those

That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;  
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman  
lines

Of empire, and the woman's state in each,  
How far from just; till warming with her  
theme

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique  
 And little-footed China, touch'd on  
 Mahomet  
 With much contempt, and came to  
 chivalry:  
 When some respect, however slight, was  
 paid  
 To woman, superstition all away:  
 However then commenced the dawn: a  
 beam  
 Had slanted forward, falling in a land  
 Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep,  
 indeed,  
 Their debt of thanks to her who first had  
 dared  
 To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
 Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert  
 None lordlier than themselves but that  
 which made  
 Woman and man. She had founded; they  
 must build.  
 Here might they learn whatever men were  
 taught:  
 Let them not fear: some said their heads  
 were less:  
 Some men's were small; not they the least  
 of men;  
 For often fineness compensated size;  
 Besides the brain was like the hand, and  
 grew  
 With using; thence the man's, if more was  
 more;  
 He took advantage of his strength to be  
 First in the field: some ages had been lost;  
 But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life  
 Was longer; and albeit their glorious names  
 Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in  
 truth  
 The highest is the measure of the man,  
 And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,  
 Nor those horn-handed breakers of the  
 glebe,  
 But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so  
 With woman: and in arts of government  
 Elizabeth and others; arts of war  
 The peasant Joan and others; arts of grace  
 Sappho and others vied with any man:  
 And, last not least, she who had left her  
 place,  
 And bow'd her state to them, that they  
 might grow

To use and power on this Oasis, lapt  
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from the  
 blight  
 Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy  
 Dilating on the future; 'everywhere  
 Two heads in council, two beside the  
 hearth,  
 Two in the tangled business of the world,  
 Two in the liberal offices of life,  
 Two plummets dropt for one to sound the  
 abyss  
 Of science, and the secrets of the mind:  
 Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more:  
 And everywhere the broad and bounteous  
 Earth  
 Should bear a double growth of those rare  
 souls,  
 Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of  
 the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us: the  
 rest  
 Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome,  
 she  
 Began to address us, and was moving on  
 In gratulation, till as when a boat  
 Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her  
 voice  
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she  
 cried  
 'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.' 'O,' she  
 said,  
 'What do you here? and in this dress? and  
 these?  
 Why who are these? a wolf within the fold!  
 A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious  
 to me!  
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!  
 'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd. 'Wretched  
 boy,  
 How saw you not the inscription on the  
 gate,  
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?'  
 'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who could  
 think  
 The softer Adams of your Academe,  
 O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such  
 As chanted on the blanching bones of  
 men?'

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

'But you will find it otherwise' she said.  
'You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools! my  
vow

Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,  
'That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,  
The Princess.' 'Well then, Psyche, take  
my life,

And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
For warning: bury me beside the gate,  
And cut this epitaph above my bones;  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,  
All for the common good of womankind.'*

'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having seen  
And heard the Lady Psyche.'

I struck in:

'Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the  
truth;

Receive it; and in me behold the Prince  
Your countryman, affianced years ago  
'To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,  
And thus (what other way was left) I came.'  
'O Sir, O Prince, I have no country, none;  
If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was  
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.

Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not  
breathe

Within this vestal limit, and how should I,  
Who am not mine, say, live: the thunder-  
bolt

Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it falls.'  
'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that inscription  
there,

I think no more of deadly lurks therein,  
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there  
be,

If more and acted on, what follows? war;  
Your own work marr'd: for this your  
Academe,

Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo  
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass  
With all fair theories only made to gild  
A stormless summer.' 'Let the Princess  
judge

Of that' she said: 'farewell, Sir—and to  
you.

I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I rejoin'd,  
'The fifth in line from that old Florian,  
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall

(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow  
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)  
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,  
And all else fled? we point to it, and we say,  
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,  
But branches current yet in kindred veins.'  
'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added; 'she  
With whom I sang about the morning hills,  
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple  
fly,

And snared the squirrel of the glen? are  
you

That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing  
brow,

To smoothe my pillow, mix the foaming  
draught

Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read  
My sickness down to happy dreams? are  
you

That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?  
You were that Psyche, but what are you  
now?'

'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for  
whom

I would be that for ever which I seem,  
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
And glean your scatter'd sapience.'

Then once more,

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I began,

'That on her bridal morn before she past  
From all her old companions, when the  
king

Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient  
ties

Would still be dear beyond the southern  
hills;

That were there any of our people there  
In want or peril, there was one to hear  
And help them? look! for such are these  
and I.'

'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd, 'to  
whom,

In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn  
Came flying while you sat beside the well?  
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,  
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and  
the blood

Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.  
That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet  
you wept.

O by the bright head of my little niece,

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

You were that Psyche, and what are you now?

'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said again,  
'The mother of the sweetest little maid,  
That ever crow'd for kisses.'

'Out upon it!' She answer'd, 'peace! and why should I not play

The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?  
Him you call great: he for the common weal,

The fading politics of mortal Rome,  
As I might slay this child, if good need were,

Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom  
The secular emancipation turns  
Of half this world, be swerved from right to save

A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.  
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.  
O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear  
My conscience will not count me fleckless;  
yet—

Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise  
You perish) as you came, to slip away  
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,  
These women were too barbarous, would not learn;

They fled, who might have shamed us:  
promise, all.'

What could we else, we promised each;  
and she,

Like some wild creature newly-caged,  
commenced

A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
By Florian; holding out her lily arms  
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:

'I knew you at the first: tho' you have grown

You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and glad  
To see you, Florian. I give thee to death  
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.  
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.  
Our mother, is she well?'

With that she kiss'd  
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung  
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up  
From out a common vein of memory

Sweet household talk, and phrases of the  
hearth,

And far allusion, till the gracious dews  
Began to glisten and to fall: and while  
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a  
voice,

'I brought a message here from Lady  
Blanche.'

Back started she, and turning round we  
saw

The Lady Blanche's daughter where she  
stood,

Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,  
That clad her like an April daffodilly  
(Her mother's colour) with her lips apart,  
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,  
As bottom agates seen to wave and float  
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the  
door.

Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah—Melissa—you!  
You heard us?' and Melissa, 'O pardon me  
I heard, I could not help it, did not wish:  
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,  
Nor think I bear that heart within my  
breast,

To give three gallant gentlemen to death.'  
'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we two  
Were always friends, none closer, elm and  
vine:

But yet your mother's jealous tempera-  
ment—

Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or  
prove

The Danaid of a leaky vase, for fear  
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
My honour, these their lives.' 'Ah, fear  
me not'

Replied Melissa; 'no—I would not tell,  
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard  
things

That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'

'Be it so' the other, 'that we still may lead  
The new light up, and culminate in peace,  
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'  
Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest man  
Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls  
Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

(Tho', Madam, *you* should answer, *we*  
would ask)

Less welcome find among us, if you came  
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,  
Myself for something more.' He said not  
what,

But 'Thanks,' she answer'd 'Go: we have  
been too long

Together: keep your hoods about the face;  
They do so that affect abstraction here.

Speak little; mix not with the rest; and  
hold

Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well.'

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,  
And held her round the knees against his  
waist,

And blew the swoll'n cheek of a trumpeter,  
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and  
the child

Push'd her flat hand against his face and  
laugh'd;

And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd  
For half the day thro' stately theatres  
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we  
heard

The grave Professor. On the lecture slate  
The circle rounded under female hands  
With flawless demonstration: follow'd then  
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out  
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words  
long

That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time  
Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all  
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
The morals, something of the frame, the  
rock,

The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the  
flower,

Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
And whatsoever can be taught and known;  
Till like three horses that have broken  
fence,

And glutted all night long breast-deep in  
corn,

We issued gorged with knowledge, and I  
spoke:

'Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we.'  
'They hunt old trails' said Cyril 'very well;  
But when did woman ever yet invent?'

'Ungracious!' answer'd Florian; 'have you  
learnt

No more from Psyche's lecture, you that  
talk'd

The trash that made me sick, and almost  
sad?'

'O trash' he said, 'but with a kernel in it.  
Should I not call her wise, who made me  
wise?

And learnt? I learnt more from her in a  
flash,

Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,  
And every Muse tumbled a science in.  
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,  
And round these halls a thousand baby  
loves

Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,  
Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O  
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,  
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,  
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;  
He cleft me thro' the stomacher; and now  
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase  
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?  
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,  
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I  
Flatter myself that always everywhere  
I know the substance when I see it. Well,  
Arc castles shadows? Three of them? Is  
she

The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,  
Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd  
coat?

For dear are those three castles to my wants,  
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,  
And two dear things are one of double  
worth,

And much I might have said, but that my  
zone

Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! O to hear  
The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants  
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,  
To break my chain, to shake my mane:  
but thou,

Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!  
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my  
throat;

Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Star-sisters answering under crescent  
brows;  
Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and  
loose  
A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,  
Where they like swallows coming out of  
time  
Will wonder why they came; but hark the  
bell  
For dinner, let us go!

And in we stream'd  
Among the columns, pacing staid and still  
By twos and threes, till all from end to end  
With beauties every shade of brown and fair  
In colours gayer than the morning mist,  
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.  
How might a man not wander from his wits  
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept  
mine own

Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,  
The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
Sat compass'd with professors: they, the  
while,  
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro:  
A clamour thicken'd, mixt with inmost  
terms

Of art and science: Lady Blanche alone  
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,  
With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,  
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat  
In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace  
Concluded, and we sought the gardens:  
there

One walk'd reciting by herself, and one  
In this hand held a volume as to read,  
And smoothed a petted peacock down with  
that:

Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,  
Or under arches of the marble bridge  
Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some hid  
and sought

In the orange thickets: others tost a ball  
Above the fountain-jets, and back again  
With laughter: others lay about the lawns,  
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their  
May

Was passing: what was learning unto  
them?

They wish'd to marry; they could rule a  
house;

Men hated learned women: but we three  
Sat muffled like the Fates; and often came  
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
That harm'd not: then day droopt; the  
chapel bells

Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt with  
those

Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,  
Before two streams of light from wall to  
wall,

While the great organ almost burst his  
pipes,  
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the  
court

A long melodious thunder to the sound  
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,  
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven  
A blessing on her labours for the world.

### III

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
Wind of the western sea!  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
Blow him again to me;  
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
Father will come to thee soon;  
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
Father will come to thee soon;  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west  
Under the silver moon:  
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

Morn in the white wake of the morning star  
Came furrowing 'all the orient into gold.  
We rose, and each by other drest with care  
Descended to the court that lay three parts  
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were  
touch'd

Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount,  
and watch'd  
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble,  
approach'd  
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of  
sleep,  
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

The circled Iris of a night of tears;  
'And fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while yet you may!

My mother knows:' and when I ask'd her 'how,'

'My fault' she wept 'my fault! and yet not mine;

Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me. My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night

To rail at Lady Psyche and her side. She says the Princess should have been the Head,

Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms; And so it was agreed when first they came; But Lady Psyche was the right hand now, And she the left, or not, or seldom used; Hers more than half the students, all the love.

And so last night she fell to canvass you: Her countrywomen! she did not envy her. "Who ever saw such wild barbarians?

Girls?—more like men!" and at these words the snake,

My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast; And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd: "O marvellously modest maiden, you!

Men! girls, like men! why, if they had been men

You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus

For wholesale comment." Pardon, I am shamed

That I must needs repeat for my excuse What looks so little graceful: "men" (for still

My mother went revolving on the word) "And so they are,—very like men indeed— And with that woman closeted for hours!" Then came these dreadful words out one by one,

"Why—these—*are*—men:" I shudder'd: "and you know it."

"O ask me nothing," I said: "And she knows too, And she conceals it." So my mother clutch'd

The truth at once, but with no word from me;

And now thus early risen she goes to inform The Princess: Lady Psyche will be crush'd; But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly:

But heal me with your pardon ere you go.'

'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?'

Said Cyril: 'Pale one, blush again: than wear

Those lilies, better blush our lives away.

Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven'

He added, 'lest some classic Angel speak In scorn of us, "They mounted, Gany-medes,

To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn."

But I will melt this marble into wax

To yield us farther furlough:' and he went.

    Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought

He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,' Florian ask'd,

'How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.'

'O long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these two Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my mother, Too jealous, often fretful as the wind

Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her: I never knew my father, but she says

(God help her) she was wedded to a fool; And still she rail'd against the state of things.

She had the care of Lady Ida's youth, And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.

But when your sister came she won the heart

Of Ida: they were still together, grew (For so they said themselves) inosculated;

Consonant chords that shiver to one note; One mind in all things: yet my mother still

Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories, And angled with them for her pupil's love:

She calls her plagiarist; I know not what: But I must go: I dare not tarry,' and light,

As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

    Then murmur'd Florian gazing after her, 'An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

If I could love, why this were she: how pretty  
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,  
As if to close with Cyril's random wish:  
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,  
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow.'

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of the crane,  
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I  
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.  
My princess, O my princess! true she errs,  
But in her own grand way: being herself  
Three times more noble than three score  
of men,  
She sees herself in every woman else,  
And so she wears her error like a crown  
To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,  
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix  
The nectar; but—ah she—whene'er she  
moves  
The Samian Herè rises and she speaks  
A Memnon smitten with the morning  
Sun.'

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd  
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,  
And leaning there on those balusters, high  
Above the empurpled champaign, drank  
the gale  
That blown about the foliage underneath,  
And sated with the innumerable rose,  
Beat calm upon our eyelids. Hither came  
Cyril, and yawning 'O hard task,' he cried;  
'No fighting shadows here! I forced a way  
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.  
Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump  
A league of street in summer solstice down,  
Than hammer at this reverend gentle-  
woman.  
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found her  
there  
At point to move, and settled in her eyes  
The green malignant light of coming storm.

Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,  
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I pray'd  
Concealment: she demanded who we were,  
And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,  
But, your example pilot, told her all.  
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.  
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,  
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.  
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,  
And our three lives. True—we had limed  
ourselves  
With open eyes, and we must take the  
chance.  
But such extremes, I told her, well might  
harm  
The woman's cause. "Not more than  
now," she said,  
"So puddled as it is with favouritism."  
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might  
befall  
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew:  
Her answer was "Leave me to deal with  
that."  
I spoke of war to come and many deaths,  
And she replied, her duty was to speak,  
And duty duty, clear of consequences.  
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I knew  
No rock so hard but that a little wave  
May beat admission in a thousand years,  
I recommenced; "Decide not ere you  
pause.  
I find you here but in the second place,  
Some say the third—the authentic found-  
ress you.  
I offer boldly: we will seat you highest:  
Wink at our advent: help my prince to  
gain  
His rightful bride, and here I promise you  
Some palace in our land, where you shall  
reign  
The head and heart of all our fair she-  
world,  
And your great name flow on with broaden-  
ing time  
For ever." Well, she balanced this a little,  
And told me she would answer us to-day,  
Meantime be mute: thus much, nor more  
I gain'd.'



## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.

'That afternoon the Princess rode to take  
The dip of certain strata to the North.  
Would we go with her? we should find the  
land

Worth seeing; and the river made a fall  
Out yonder;' then she pointed on to where  
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks  
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all  
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.  
Then summon'd to the porch we went.

She stood  
Among her maidens, higher by the head,  
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one  
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd  
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near;  
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure  
came

Upon me, the weird vision of our house:  
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,  
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,  
Her college and her maidens, empty masks,  
And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt  
My heart beat thick with passion and with  
awe;

Then from my breast the involuntary sigh  
Brake, as she smote me with the light of  
eyes

That lent my knee desire to kneel, and  
shook

My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
Went forth in long retinue following up  
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said:  
'O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not  
Too harsh to your companion yesternorn;  
Unwillingly we spake.' 'No—not to her,'  
I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we spake  
Your Highness might have seem'd the  
thing you say.'

'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassadors  
From him to me? we give you, being  
strange,

A license: speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him—could  
have wish'd—

'Our king expects—was there no pre-  
contract?

There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem  
All he prefigured, and he could not see  
The bird of passage flying south but long'd  
To follow: surely, if your Highness keep  
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to  
death,

Or baser courses, children of despair.'

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not read—  
no books?

Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals  
in that

Which men delight in, martial exercise?

To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;  
As girls were once, as we ourself have been:  
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with  
them:

We touch on our dead self, nor shun to  
do it,

Being other—since we learnt our meaning  
here,

To lift the woman's fall'n divinity  
Upon an even pedestal with man.'

She paused, and added with a haughtier  
smile

'And as to precontracts, we move, my  
friend,

At no man's beck, but know ourself and  
thee,

O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out  
She kept her state, and left the drunken  
king

To brawl at Shushan underneath the  
palms.'

'Alas your Highness breathes full East,'  
I said,

'On that which leans to you. I know the  
Prince,

I prize his truth: and then how vast a work  
To assail this gray preëminence of man!

You grant me license; might I use it?  
think;

Ere half be done perchance your life may  
fail;

Then comes the feebler heiress of your  
plan,

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

And takes and ruins all; and thus your  
pains

May only make that footprint upon sand  
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice  
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that  
you,

With only Fame for spouse and your great  
deeds

For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,  
Meanwhile, what every woman counts her  
due,

Love, children, happiness?'

And she exclaim'd,  
'Peace, you young savage of the Northern  
wild!

What! tho' your Prince's love were like a  
God's,

Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?  
You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd to  
thus:

Yet will we say for children, would they  
grew

Like field-flowers everywhere! we like  
them well:

But children die; and let me tell you, girl,  
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot  
die;

They with the sun and moon renew their  
light

For ever, blessing those that look on them.  
Children—that men may pluck them from  
our hearts,

Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—  
O—children—there is nothing upon earth  
More miserable than she that has a son  
And sees him err: nor would we work for  
fame;

Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause  
of Great,

Who learns the one POU STO whence after-  
hands

May move the world, tho' she herself effect  
But little: wherefore up and act, nor shrink  
For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had  
been,

In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
Of giants living, each, a thousand years,  
That we might see our own work out, and  
watch

The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself  
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand  
Imaginations might at all be won.

And she broke out interpreting my  
thoughts:

'No doubt we seem a kind of monster to  
you;

We are used to that: for women, up till this  
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle  
taboo,

Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far  
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess  
How much their welfare is a passion  
to us.

If we could give them surer, quicker  
proof—

Oh if our end were less achievable  
By slow approaches, than by single act  
Of immolation, any phase of death,  
We were as prompt to spring against the  
pikes,

Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;  
And up we came to where the river sloped  
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black  
blocks

A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the  
woods,  
And danced the colour, and, below, stuck  
out

The bones of some vast bulk that lived and  
roar'd

Before man was. She gazed awhile and  
said,

'As these rude bones to us, are we to her  
That will be.' 'Dare we dream of that,' I  
ask'd,

'Which wrought us, as the workman and  
his work,  
That practice betters?' 'How,' she cried,  
'you love

The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,  
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald  
plane

Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the  
life;

She rapt upon her subject, he on her:

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

For there are schools for all.' 'And yet' I  
 said  
 'Methinks I have not found among them all  
 One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of that,'  
 She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not: in  
 truth  
 We shudder but to dream our maids should  
 ape  
 Those monstrous males that carve the  
 living hound,  
 And cram him with the fragments of the  
 grave,  
 Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,  
 Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful  
 jest,  
 Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know  
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter  
 hangs:  
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
 Nor willing men should come among us,  
 learnt,  
 For many weary moons before we came,  
 This craft of healing. Were you sick, our-  
 self  
 Would tend upon you. To your question  
 now,  
 Which touches on the workman and his  
 work.  
 Let there be light and there was light:  
 'tis so:  
 For was, and is, and will be, are but is;  
 And all creation is one act at once,  
 The birth of light: but we that are not all,  
 As parts, can see but parts, now this, now  
 that,  
 And live, perforce, from thought to  
 thought, and make  
 One act a phantom of succession: thus  
 Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow,  
 Time;  
 But in the shadow will we work, and mould  
 The woman to the fuller day.'

She spake

With kindled eyes: we rode a league  
 beyond,  
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing,  
 came  
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
 Full of all beauty. 'O how sweet' I said  
 (For I was half-oblivious of my mask)

'To linger here with one that loved us.'  
 'Yea,'  
 She answer'd, 'or with fair philosophies  
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields  
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,  
 Where paced the Demigods of old, and  
 saw  
 The soft white vapour streak the crowned  
 towers  
 Built to the Sun:' then, turning to her  
 maids,  
 'Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;  
 Lay out the viands.' At the word, they  
 raised  
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
 With fair Corinna's triumph; here she  
 stood,  
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,  
 The woman-conqueror; woman-conquer'd  
 there  
 The bearded Victor of ten-thousand  
 hymns,  
 And all the men mourn'd at his side: but  
 we  
 Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril  
 kept  
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
 With mine affianced. Many a little hand  
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the  
 rocks,  
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel set  
 In the dark crag: and then we turn'd, we  
 wound  
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
 Hammering and clinking, chattering stony  
 names  
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and  
 tuff,  
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun  
 Grew broader toward his death and fell,  
 and all  
 The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

### IV

The splendour falls on castle walls  
 And snowy summits old in story:  
 The long light shakes across the lakes,  
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,  
 dying.

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, farther going!  
O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,  
dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river;  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow for ever and for ever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,  
dying.

'There sinks the nebulous star we call the  
Sun,  
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound'  
Said Ida; 'let us down and rest;' and we  
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,  
By every coppice-feather'd chasm and  
cleft,  
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where  
below  
No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent  
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd  
on me,  
Descending; once or twice she lent her  
hand,  
And blissful palpitations in the blood,  
Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt  
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,  
There leaning deep in broider'd down we  
sank  
Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst  
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd  
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and  
gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us:  
lightlier move  
The minutes fledged with music:' and a  
maid,  
Of those beside her, smote her harp, and  
sang.

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they  
mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the under-  
world,

Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer  
dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering  
square;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.'

She ended with such passion that the  
tear,  
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl  
Lost in her bosom: but with some dis-  
dain  
Answer'd the Princess, 'If indeed there  
haunt  
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past  
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,  
Well needs it we should cram our ears with  
wool  
And so pace by: but thine are fancies  
hatch'd

In silken-folded idleness; nor is it  
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,  
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be,  
While down the streams that float us each  
and all

To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of  
ice,  
Throne after throne, and molten on the  
waste  
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve their  
time

Toward that great year of equal might  
and rights,  
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the  
end

Found golden: let the past be past; let be  
Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough kex  
break

The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown  
goat

Hang on the shaft, and the wild figtree split

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Their monstrous idols, care not while we  
hear

A trumpet in the distance pealing news  
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns  
Above the unrisen morrow: 'then to me;  
'Know you no song of your own land,' she  
said,  
'Not such as moans about the retrospect,  
But deals with the other distance and the  
hues  
Of promise; not a death's-head at the  
wine.'

Then I remember'd one myself had  
made,  
What time I watch'd the swallow winging  
south  
From mine own land, part made long since,  
and part  
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far  
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,  
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

'O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,  
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
And dark and true and tender is the North.

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and  
light  
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O were I thou that she might take me in,  
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with  
love,  
Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

'O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown:  
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
But in the North long since my nest is made.

'O tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,  
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her  
mine,  
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,  
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,

Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with  
alien lips,

And knew not what they meant; for still  
my voice

Rang false: but smiling 'Not for thee,' she  
said,

'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
Shall burst her veil: marsh-divers, rather,  
maid,

Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-  
crake

Grate her harsh kindred in the grass: and  
this

A mere love-poem! O for such, my friend,  
We hold them slight: they mind us of the  
time

When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves  
are men,

That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,  
And dress the victim to the offering up,  
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,  
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.  
Poor soul! I had a maid of honour once;  
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,  
A rogue of canzonets and serenades.

I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.  
So they blasphemous the muse! But great is  
song

Used to great ends: ourself have often tried  
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have  
dash'd

The passion of the prophetess; for song  
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth  
Of spirit than to junketing and love.

Love is it? Would this same mock-love,  
and this

Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,  
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,  
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and  
sphered

Whole in ourselves and owed to none.  
Enough!

But now to leaven play with profit you,  
Know you no song, the true growth of  
your soil,

That gives the manners of your country-  
women?"

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous  
head with eyes

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Of shining expectation fixt on mine.  
 Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a  
 song,  
 Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass  
 had wrought,  
 Or master'd by the sense of sport, began  
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch  
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences  
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,  
 I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and  
 shook;  
 The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;  
 'Forbear,' the Princess cried; 'Forbear,  
 Sir' I;  
 And heated thro' and thro' with wrath  
 and love,  
 I smote him on the breast; he started up;  
 There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;  
 Melissa clamour'd 'Flee the death;' 'To  
 horse'  
 Said Ida; 'home! to horse!' and fled, as  
 flies  
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,  
 When some one batters at the dovecote-  
 doors,  
 Disorderly the women. Alone I stood  
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,  
 In the pavilion: there like parting hopes  
 I heard them passing from me: hoof by  
 hoof,  
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
 Clang'd on the bridge; and then another  
 shriek,  
 'The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the  
 Head!'  
 For blind with rage she miss'd the plank,  
 and roll'd  
 In the river. Out I sprang from glow to  
 gloom:  
 There whirl'd her white robe like a blos-  
 som'd branch  
 Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,  
 No more; but woman-vested as I was  
 Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught  
 her; then  
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left  
 The weight of all the hopes of half the  
 world,  
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree  
 Was half-disrooted from his place and  
 stoop'd

To drench his dark locks in the gurgling  
 wave  
 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and  
 caught,  
 And grasping down the boughs I gain'd  
 the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly  
 group'd  
 In the hollow bank. One reaching forward  
 drew  
 My burthen from mine arms; they cried  
 'she lives.'  
 They bore her back into the tent: but I,  
 So much a kind of shame within me  
 wrought,  
 Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,  
 Nor found my friends; but push'd alone  
 on foot  
 (For since her horse was lost I left her  
 mine)  
 Across the woods, and less from Indian  
 craft  
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at  
 length  
 The garden portals. Two great statues, Art  
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt were  
 valves  
 Of open-work in which the hunter rued  
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows  
 Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon  
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the  
 gates.

A little space was left between the horns,  
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with  
 pain,  
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden  
 walks,  
 And, tost on thoughts that changed from  
 hue to hue,  
 Now poring on the glowworm, now the  
 star,  
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had  
 wheel'd  
 Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step

Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
 Than female, moving thro' the uncertain  
 gloom,

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this were she,'

But it was Florian. 'Hist O Hist,' he said,  
'They seek us: out so late is out of rules.

Moreover "seize the strangers" is the cry.  
How came you here?' I told him: 'I said he,

'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart,  
return'd.

Arriving all confused among the rest  
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath  
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.  
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each  
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last of all,  
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.

She, question'd if she knew us men, at first  
Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:  
And then, demanded if her mother knew,  
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:  
From whence the Royal mind, familiar  
with her,

Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent  
For Psyche, but she was not there; she  
call'd

For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;  
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to  
face;

And I slept out: but whither will you now?  
And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are  
fled:

What, if together? that were not so well.  
Would rather we had never come! I dread  
His wildness, and the chances of the dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him more  
than I

That struck him: this is proper to the  
clown,

Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still  
the clown,

To harm the thing that trusts him, and to  
shame

That which he says he loves: for Cyril,  
howe'er

He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song  
Might have been worse and sinn'd in  
grosser lips

Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold  
These flashes on the surface are not he.

He has a solid base of temperament:  
But as the waterlily starts and slides  
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,  
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a  
tamarisk near

Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,  
'Names:'

He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I  
began

To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind  
And double in and out the boles, and race  
By all the fountains: fleet I was of foot:  
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes;  
behind

I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine ear  
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,  
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.  
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,  
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
And falling on my face was caught and  
known.

They haled us to the Princess where she  
sat

High in the hall: above her droop'd a lamp,  
And made the single jewel on her brow  
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,  
Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each side  
Bow'd toward her, combing out her long  
black hair.

Damp from the river; and close behind her  
stood

Eight daughters of the plough, stronger  
than men,

Huge women blowz'd with health, and  
wind, and rain,

And labour. Each was like a Druid rock;  
Or like a spire of land that stands apart  
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with  
mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing  
clove

An advent to the throne: and there beside,  
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed  
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay  
The lily-shining child; and on the left,  
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from  
wrong,

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Her round white shoulder shaken with her  
sobs,  
Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect  
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old days:  
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips:  
I led you then to all the Castalies;  
I fed you with the milk of every Muse;  
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me  
Your second mother: those were gracious  
times.

Then came your new friend: you began to  
change—

I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to cool;  
Till taken with her seeming openness  
You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,  
To me you froze: this was my meed for all.  
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,  
And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
And partly that you were my civil head,  
And chiefly you were born for something  
great,

In which I might your fellow-worker be,  
When time should serve; and thus a noble  
scheme

Grew up from seed we two long since had  
sown;

In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,  
Up in one night and due to sudden sun:  
We took this palace; but even from the first  
You stood in your own light and darken'd  
mine.

What student came but that you planed  
her path

To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,  
I your old friend and tried, she new in all?  
But still her lists were swell'd and mine  
were lean;

Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:  
Then came these wolves: *they* knew her:  
*they* endured,

Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,  
To tell her what they were, and she to hear:  
And me none told: not less to an eye like  
mine

A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
Last night, their mask was patent, and my  
foot

Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd  
To meet a cold "We thank you, we shall  
hear of it

From Lady Psyche:" you had gone to her,  
She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,  
No doubt, forslight delay, remain'd among us  
In our young nursery still unknown, the  
stem

Less grain than touchwood, while my  
honest heat

Were all miscounted as malignant haste  
To push my rival out of place and power.  
But public use required she should be  
known;

And since my oath was ta'en for public use,  
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.  
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them  
well,

Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;  
And yet this day (tho' you should hate me  
for it)

I came to tell you; found that you had gone,  
Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise: now, I  
thought,

That surely she will speak; if not, then I:  
Did she? These monsters blazon'd what  
they were,

According to the coarseness of their kind,  
For thus I hear; and known at last (my  
work)

And full of cowardice and guilty shame,  
I grant in her some sense of shame, she  
flies;

And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,  
I, that have lent my life to build up yours,  
I that have wasted here health, wealth, and  
time,

And talent, I—you know it—I will not  
boast:

Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff  
For every gust of chance, and men will say  
We did not know the real light, but chased  
The wisp that flickers where no foot can  
tread.'

She ceased: the Princess answer'd  
coldly, 'Good:

Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.  
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)  
Our mind is changed: we take it to ourself.'



## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture  
throat,  
And shot from crooked lips a haggard  
smile.

'The plan was mine. I built the nest' she  
said

'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and stoop'd  
to updrag

Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,  
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face,  
and cast

A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,  
A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,  
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and  
while

We gazed upon her came a little stir  
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd  
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,  
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear  
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face,  
and wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell  
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the  
Head

Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood  
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
Regarding, while she read, till over brow  
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful  
bloom

As of some fire against a stormy cloud,  
When the wild peasant rights himself, the  
rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the  
heavens;

For anger most it seem'd, while now her  
breast,

Beaten with some great passion at her  
heart,

Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard  
In the dead hush the papers that she held  
Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet  
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;  
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she  
crush'd

The scrolls together, made a sudden turn  
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,  
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should  
say

'Read,' and I read—two letters—one her  
sire's.

'Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince  
your way

We knew not your ungracious laws, which  
learnt,

We, conscious of what temper you are  
built,

Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell  
Into his father's hands, who has this night,  
You lying close upon his territory,  
Slipt round and in the dark invested you,  
And here he keeps me hostage for his son.'

The second was my father's running  
thus:

'You have our son: touch not a hair of his  
head:

Render him up unscathed: give him your  
hand:

Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we hear  
You hold the woman is the better man;  
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
Would make all women kick against their  
Lords

Thro' all the world, and which might well  
deserve

That we this night should pluck your  
palace down;

And we will do it, unless you send us back  
Our son, on the instant, whole.'

So far I read;  
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

'O not to pry and peer on your reserve,  
But led by golden wishes, and a hope

The child of regal compact, did I break  
Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex

But venerator, zealous it should be  
All that it might be: hear me, for I bear,

Tho' man, yet human, whatso'er your  
wrongs,

From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life  
Less mine than yours: my nurse would tell  
me of you;

I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,  
Vague brightness; when a boy, you stoop'd  
to me

From all high places, lived in all fair lights,  
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost  
south

And blown to inmost north; at eve and  
dawn

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;  
The leader wildswan in among the stars  
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of  
glowworm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,  
Because I would have reach'd you, had  
you been

Sphered up with Cassiopia, or the en-  
throned

Persephonè in Hades, now at length,  
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,  
A man I came to see you: but, indeed,  
Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,  
O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait  
On you, their centre: let me say but this,  
That many a famous man and woman,  
town

And landskip, have I heard of, after seen  
The dwarfs of presage: tho' when known,  
there grew

Another kind of beauty in detail  
Made them worth knowing; but in you I  
found

My boyish dream involved and dazzled  
down

And master'd, while that after-beauty  
makes

Such head from act to act, from hour to  
hour,

Within me, that except you slay me here,  
According to your bitter statute-book,  
I cannot cease to follow you, as they say  
The seal does music; who desire you more  
Than growing boys their manhood; dying  
lips,

With many thousand matters left to do,  
The breath of life; O more than poor men  
wealth,

Than sick men health—yours, yours, not  
mine—but half

Without you; with you, whole; and of  
those halves

You worthiest; and howe'er you block and  
bar

Your heart with system out from mine, I  
hold

That it becomes no man to nurse despair,  
But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms  
To follow up the worthiest till he die:  
Yet that I came not all unauthorized  
Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and  
dash'd

Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce  
Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,  
As waits a river level with the dam  
Ready to burst and flood the world with  
foam:

And so she would have spoken, but there  
rose

A hubbub in the court of half the maids  
Gather'd together: from the illumined hall  
Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a  
press

Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewcs,  
And rainbow robes, and gems and gem-  
like eyes,

And gold and golden heads; they to and fro  
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red,  
some pale,

All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,  
Some crying there was an army in the land,  
And some that men were in the very walls,  
And some they cared not; till a clamour  
grew

As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,  
And worse-confounded: high above them  
stood

The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head: but  
rising up

Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so  
To the open window moved, remaining  
there

Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves  
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye  
Glazes ruin, and the wild birds on the  
light

Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her  
arms and call'd

Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

'What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your  
Head?

On me, me, me, the storm first breaks:  
I dare

All these male thunderbolts: what is it ye  
fear?

Peace! there are those to avenge us and  
they come:

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

If not,—myself were like enough, O girls,  
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,  
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,  
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
Die: yet I blame you not so much for fear;  
Six thousand years of fear have made you  
that

From which I would redeem you: but for  
those

That stir this hubbub—you and you—I  
know

Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow  
morn

We hold a great convention: then shall  
they

That love their voices more than duty,  
learn

With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame  
to live

No wiser than their mothers, household  
stuff,

Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,  
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the  
clown,

The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks  
of Time,

Whose brains are in their hands and in  
their heels,

But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to  
thrum,

To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to  
scour,

For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.'

She, ending, waved her hands: thereat  
the crowd

Muttering, dissolved: then with a smile,  
that look'd

A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,  
When all the glens are drown'd in azure  
gloom

Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and  
said:

'You have done well and like a gentle-  
man,

And like a prince: you have our thanks for  
all:

And you look well too in your woman's  
dress:

Well have you done and like a gentleman.

You saved our life: we owe you bitter  
thanks:

Better have died and spilt our bones in the  
flood—

Then men had said—but now—What  
hinders me

To take such bloody vengeance on you  
both?—

Yet since our father—Wasps in our good  
hive,

You would-be quenchers of the light to be,  
Barbarians, grosser than your native  
bears—

O would I had his sceptre for one hour!

You that have dared to break our bound,  
and gull'd

Our servants, wrong'd and lied and  
thwarted us—

I wed with thee! I bound by precontract  
Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all  
the gold

That veins the world were pack'd to make  
your crown,

And every spoken tongue should lord you.  
Sir,

Your falsehood and yourself are hateful  
to us:

I trample on your offers and on you:

Begone: we will not look upon you more.  
Here, push them out at gates.'

In wrath she spake.

Then those eight mighty daughters of the  
plough

Bent their broad faces toward us and  
address'd

Their motion: twice I sought to plead my  
cause,

But on my shoulder hung their heavy  
hands,

The weight of destiny: so from her face

They push'd us, down the steps, and thro'  
the court,

And with grim laughter thrust us out at  
gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty  
mound

Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and  
heard

The voices murmuring. While I listen'd,  
came

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

On a sudden the weird seizure and the  
doubt:

I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;  
The Princess with her monstrous woman-  
guard,

The jest and earnest working side by side,  
The cataract and the tumult and the kings  
Were shadows; and the long fantastic night  
With all its doings had and had not been,  
And all things were and were not.

This went by

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits  
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;  
Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts  
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one  
To whom the touch of all mischance but  
came

As night to him that sitting on a hill  
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway  
sun

Set into sunrise; then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,  
That beat to battle where he stands;  
Thy face across his fancy comes,  
And gives the battle to his hands:  
A moment, while the trumpets blow,  
He sees his brood about thy knee;  
The next, like fire he meets the foe,  
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang: we thought her half-  
possess'd,  
She struck such warbling fury thro' the  
words;

And, after, feigning pique at what she  
call'd

The raillery, or grotesque, or false sub-  
lime—

Like one that wishes at a dance to change  
The music—clapt her hands and cried for  
war,

Or some grand fight to kill and make an  
end:

And he that next inherited the tale  
Half turning to the broken statue, said,  
'Sir Ralph has got your colours: if I prove  
Your knight, and fight your battle, what  
for me?'

It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb  
Lay by her like a model of her hand.

She took it and she flung it. 'Fight' she  
said,

'And make us all we would be, great and  
good.'

He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,  
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,  
Arranged the favour, and assumed the  
Prince.

v

Now, scarce three paces measured from  
the mound,

We stumbled on a stationary voice,  
And 'Stand, who goes?' 'Two from the  
palace' I.

'The second two: they wait,' he said, 'pass  
on;

His Highness wakes:' and one, that clash'd  
in arms,

By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led  
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard  
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake  
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent  
Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light

Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd  
to hear,

As in a poplar grove when a light wind  
wakes

A lisping of the innumerable leaf and dies,  
Each hissing in his neighbour's ear; and then  
A strangled titter, out of which there brake  
On all sides, clamouring etiquette to death,  
Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old  
kings

Began to wag their baldness up and down,  
The fresh young captains flash'd their  
glittering teeth,

The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved  
and blew,

And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded  
Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet  
with tears,

Panted from weary sides 'King, you are  
free!

We did but keep you surety for our son,  
If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin, thou,  
That tends her bristled grunterns in the  
sludge.'

For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn  
with briers,

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,  
And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel.

Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm

A whisper'd jest to some one near him,  
'Look,

He has been among his shadows.' 'Satan take

The old women and their shadows! (thus the King

Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with men.

Go: Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink  
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,  
Away we stole, and transient in a trice  
From what was left of faded woman-slough  
To sheathing splendours and the golden scale

Of harness, issued in the sun, that now  
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,

And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril met us.

A little shy at first, but by and by  
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given

For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,  
whereon

Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away  
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night  
Had come on Psyche weeping: 'then we fell

Into your father's hand, and there she lies,  
But will not speak, nor stir.'

He show'd a tent  
A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and there  
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,

Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,  
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,

And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,

All her fair length upon the ground she lay:  
And at her head a follower of the camp,  
A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,

Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come' he whisper'd to her,  
'Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not thus.

What have you done but right? you could not slay

Me, nor your prince: look up: be comforted:

Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,

When fall'n in darker ways.' And likewise I:

'Be comforted: have I not lost her too,  
In whose least act abides the nameless charm

That none has else for me?' She heard, she moved,

She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she sat,  
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth

As those that mourn half-shrouded over death

In deathless marble. 'Her,' she said, 'my friend—

Parted from her—betray'd her cause and mine—

Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your faith?

O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!

To whom remorseful Cyril, 'Yet I pray  
Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child!'

At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

'Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,

My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!

For now will cruel Ida keep her back;  
And either she will die from want of care,

Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say  
The child is hers—for every little fault,  
The child is hers; and they will beat my girl

Remembering her mother: O my flower!

Or they will take her, they will make her hard,

And she will pass me by in after-life  
With some cold reverence worse than were

she dead.

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Ill mother that I was to leave her there,  
To lag behind, scared by the cry they  
made,

The horror of the shame among them all:  
But I will go and sit beside the doors,  
And make a wild petition night and day,  
Until they hate to hear me like a wind  
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,  
And lay my little blossom at my feet,  
My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one child:  
And I will take her up and go my way,  
And satisfy my soul with kissing her:  
Ah! what might that man not deserve of  
me

Who gave me back my child?' 'Be comforted,'

Said Cyril, 'you shall have it:' but again  
She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank,  
and so

Like tender things that being caught feign  
death,

Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran  
Thro' all the camp and inward raced the  
scouts

With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
We left her by the woman, and without  
Found the gray kings at parle: and 'Look  
you' cried

My father 'that our compact be fulfill'd:  
You have spoilt this child; she laughs at  
you and man:

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and  
him;

But red-faced war has rods of steel and  
fire;

She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me:  
'We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time  
With our strange girl: and yet they say  
that still

You love her. Give us, then, your mind at  
large:

How say you, war or not?'

'Not war, if possible,  
O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse of war,  
The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,  
The smouldering homestead, and the  
household flower

Torn from the lintel—all the common  
wrong—

A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her  
Three times a monster: now she lightens  
scorn

At him that mars her plan, but then would  
hate

(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,  
And every face she look'd on justify it)

The general foe. More soluble is this knot,  
By gentleness than war. I want her love.

What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd  
Your cities into shards with catapults,

She would not love;—or brought her  
chain'd, a slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,  
Not ever would she love; but brooding  
turn

The book of scorn, till all my flitting chance  
Were caught within the record of her  
wrongs,

And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire,  
than this

I would the old God of war himself were  
dead,

Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of  
wreck,

Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in  
ice,

Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spake

My father, 'Tut, you know them not, the  
girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!

Man is the hunter; woman is his game:  
The sleek and shining creatures of the  
chase,

We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;  
They love us for it, and we ride them down.

Wheeling and siding with them! Out! for  
shame!

Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to  
them

As he that does the thing they dare not  
do,

Breathing and sounding beauteous battle,  
comes

With the air of the trumpet round him, and  
leaps in

Among the women, snares them by the  
score

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd  
with death

He reddens what he kisses: thus I won  
Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,  
Worth winning; but this firebrand—  
gentleness

To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,  
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
Were wisdom to it.'

'Yea but Sire,' I cried,  
'Wild natures need wise curbs. The  
soldier? No:

What dares not Ida do that she should  
prize

The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose  
The yesternight, and storming in extremes,  
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance  
down

Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the  
death,

No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her, king,  
True woman: but you clash them all in one,  
That have as many differences as we.

The violet varies from the lily as far  
As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one  
The silken priest of peace, one this, one  
that,

And some unworthily; their sinless faith,  
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they  
need

More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?  
They worth it? truer to the law within?  
Severer in the logic of a life?

Twice as magnetic to sweet influences  
Of earth and heaven? and she of whom  
you speak,

My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
Creation minted in the golden moods  
Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a  
touch,

But pure as lines of green that streak the  
white

Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,  
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual  
mire,

But whole and one: and take them all-in-all,  
Were we ourselves but half as good, as  
kind,

As truthful, much that Ida claims as right  
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly  
theirs

As dues of Nature. To our point: not war:  
Lest I lose all.'

'Nay, nay, you spake but sense'  
Said Gama. 'We remember love ourself  
In our sweet youth; we did not rate him  
then

This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.  
You talk almost like Ida: *she* can talk;  
And there is something in it as you say:  
But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for  
it.—

He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,  
I would he had our daughter: for the rest,  
Our own detention, why, the causes  
weigh'd,

Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—  
We would do much to gratify your Prince—  
We pardon it; and for your ingress here  
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,  
You did but come as goblins in the night,  
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's  
head,

Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the  
milking-maid,

Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of  
cream:

But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,  
He comes back safe) ride with us to our  
lines,

And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice  
As ours with Ida: something may be  
done—

I know not what—and ours shall see us  
friends.

You, likewise, our late guests, if so you  
will,

Follow us: who knows? we four may build  
some plan

Foursquare to opposition.'

Here he reach'd

White hands of farewell to my sire, who  
growl'd

An answer which, half-muffled in his  
beard,

Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across  
the lawns

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of  
Spring

In every bole, a song on every spray  
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and  
woke

Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
In the old king's ears, who promised help,  
and oozed

All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode  
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews  
Gather'd by night and peace, with each  
light air

On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts  
than Peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled  
squares,

And squadrons of the Prince, trampling  
the flowers

With clamour: for among them rose a cry  
As if to greet the king; they made a halt;  
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms;  
the drum

Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial  
fife;

And in the blast and bray of the long horn  
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
The banner: anon to meet us lightly  
pranced

Three captains out; nor ever had I seen  
Such thews of men: the midmost and the  
highest

Was Arac: all about his motion clung  
The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made  
them glance

Like those three stars of the airy Giant's  
zone,

That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;  
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,  
And bickers into red and emerald, shone  
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as  
they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I  
heard

War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of  
force,

Whose home is in the sinews of a man,  
Stir in me as to strike: then took the king  
His three broad sons; with now a wander-  
ing hand

And now a pointed finger, told them all:  
A common light of smiles at our disguise  
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy  
jest

Had labour'd down within his ample lungs,  
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in  
words.

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he him-  
self

Your captive, yet my father wills not war:  
And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war or  
no?

But then this question of your troth re-  
mains:

And there's a downright honest meaning  
in her;

She flies too high, she flies too high! and  
yet

She ask'd but space and fairplay for her  
scheme;

She prest and prest it on me—I myself,  
What know I of these things? but, life and  
soul!

I thought her half-right talking of her  
wrongs;

I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of  
that?

I take her for the flower of womankind,  
And so I often told her, right or wrong,  
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she  
loves,

And, right or wrong, I care not: this is all,  
I stand upon her side: she made me swear  
it—

'Sdeath—and with solemn rites by candle-  
light—

Swear by St. something—I forget her  
name—

Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men;  
*She* was a princess too; and so I swore.  
Come, this is all; she will not: waive your  
claim:

If not, the foughten field, what else, at once  
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's  
will.'

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up  
My precontract, and loth by brainless war  
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;



## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
And fingering at the hair about his lip,  
To prick us on to combat 'Like to like!  
The woman's garment hid the woman's  
heart.'

A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a  
blow!

For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,  
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the  
point

Where idle boys are cowards to their  
shame,

'Decide it here: why not? we are three to  
three.'

Then spake the third 'But three to  
three? no more?

No more, and in our noble sister's cause?  
More, more, for honour: every captain  
waits

Hungry for honour, angry for his king.

More, more, some fifty on a side, that each  
May breathe himself, and quick! by over-  
throw

Of these or those, the question settled die.'

'Yea,' answer'd I, 'for this wild wreath  
of air,

This flake of rainbow flying on the highest  
Foam of men's deeds—this honour, if ye  
will.

It needs must be for honour if at all:  
Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,  
And if we win, we fail: she would not keep  
Her compact.' 'Sdeath! but we will send  
to her,'

Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she should  
Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',  
And you shall have her answer by the  
word.'

'Boys!' shriek'd the old king, but vain-  
lier than a hen

To her false daughters in the pool; for none  
Regarded; neither seem'd there more to  
say:

Back rode we to my father's camp, and  
found

He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,  
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells

With her own people's life: three times he  
went:

The first, he blew and blew, but none  
appear'd:

He batter'd at the doors; none came: the  
next,

An awful voice within had warn'd him  
thence:

The third, and those eight daughters of the  
plough

Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught  
his hair,

And so belabour'd him on rib and cheek  
They made him wild: not less one glance  
he caught

Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there  
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm  
Tho' compass'd by two armies and the  
noise

Of arms; and standing like a stately Pine  
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
When storm is on the heights, and right  
and left

Suck'd from the dark heart of the long  
hills roll

The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and yet  
her will

Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was  
pledged

To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd  
His iron palms together with a cry;

Himself would tilt it out among the lads:  
But overborne by all his bearded lords

With reasons drawn from age and state,  
perforce

He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce  
demur:

And many a bold knight started up in heat,  
And swore to combat for my claim till  
death.

All on this side the palace ran the field  
Flat to the garden-wall: and likewise here,  
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,  
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,  
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with

Tomyris

And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
But now fast barr'd: so here upon the flat

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

All that long morn the lists were hammer'd  
up,  
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,  
With message and defiance, went and  
came;  
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
But shaken here and there, and rolling  
words  
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

'O brother, you have known the pangs  
we felt,  
What heats of indignation when we heard  
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's  
feet;  
Of lands in which at the altar the poor  
bride  
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a  
scourge;  
Of living hearts that crack within the fire  
Where smoulder their dead despots; and  
of those,—  
Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling  
Their pretty maids in the running flood,  
and swoops  
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart  
Made for all noble motion: and I saw  
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
With smoother men: the old leaven  
leaven'd all:  
Millions of throats would bawl for civil  
rights,  
No woman named: therefore I set my  
face  
Against all men, and lived but for mine  
own.  
Far off from men I built a fold for them:  
I stored it full of rich memorial:  
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,  
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey  
And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy boys  
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our  
peace,  
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know  
not what  
Of insolence and love, some pretext held  
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
Seal'd not the bond—the striplings!—for  
their sport!—  
I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame  
these?

Or you? or I? for since you think me  
touch'd  
In honour—what, I would not aught of  
false—  
Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know  
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's  
blood  
You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide  
What end soever: fail you will not. Still  
Take not his life: he risk'd it for my own;  
His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you do,  
Fight and fight well; strike and strike  
home. O dear  
Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you,  
you  
The sole men to be mingled with our cause,  
The sole men we shall prize in the after-  
time,  
Your very armour hallow'd, and your  
statues  
Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd  
aside,  
We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
And mould a generation strong to move  
With claim on claim from right to right,  
till she  
Whose name is yoked with children's,  
know herself;  
And Knowledge in our own land make her  
free,  
And, ever following those two crowned  
twins,  
Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery  
grain  
Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
Between the Northern and the Southern  
morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across  
the rest.  
'See that there be no traitors in your camp:  
We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust  
Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-plague  
of men!  
Almost our maids were better at their  
homes,  
Than thus man-girdled here: indeed I think  
Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
Of one unworthy mother; which she left:  
She shall not have it back: the child shall  
grow

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

To prize the authentic mother of her mind.  
I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
This morning: there the tender orphan  
hands

Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm  
from thence

The wrath I nursed against the world:  
farewell.'

I ceased; he said, 'Stubborn, but she  
may sit

Upon a king's right hand in thunder-  
storms,

And breed up warriors! See now, tho'  
yourself

Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
That swallow common sense, the spindling  
king,

This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.

When the man wants weight, the woman  
takes it up,

And topples down the scales; but this is  
fixt

As are the roots of earth and base of all;  
Man for the field and woman for the  
hearth:

Man for the sword and for the needle she:  
Man with the head and woman with the  
heart:

Man to command and woman to obey;  
All else confusion. Look you! the gray  
mare

Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills  
From tile to scullery, and her small good-  
man

Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of  
Hell

Mix with his hearth: but you—she's yet a  
colt—

Take, break her: strongly groom'd and  
straitly curb'd

She might not rank with those detestable  
That let the bantling scald at home, and  
brawl

Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the  
street.

They say she's comely; there's the fairer  
chance:

I like her none the less for rating at her!  
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace

Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,  
The bearing and the training of a child  
Is woman's wisdom.'

Thus the hard old king:

I took my leave, for it was nearly noon:  
I pored upon her letter which I held,  
And on the little clause 'take not his life:'  
I mused on that wild morning in the  
woods,

And on the 'Follow, follow, thou shalt win:'  
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,  
And how the strange betrothment was to  
end:

Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's  
curse

That one should fight with shadows and  
should fall;

And like a flash the weird affection came:  
King, camp and college turn'd to hollow  
shows;

I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,  
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,  
To dream myself the shadow of a dream:  
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,  
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and  
plumed

We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared  
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land  
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more  
The trumpet, and again: at which the  
storm

Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of  
spears

And riders front to front, until they closed  
In conflict with the crash of shivering  
points,

And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I  
dream'd

Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,  
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.  
Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but kept  
their seats:

Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and  
drew:

Part stumbled mixt with floundering  
horses. Down

From those two bulks at Arac's side, and  
down

From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

The large blows rain'd, as here and every-  
where  
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing  
lists,  
And all the plain,—brand, mace, and shaft,  
and shield—  
Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd  
With hammers; till I thought, can this be  
he  
From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,  
The mother makes us most—and in my  
dream  
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,  
And highest, among the statues, statue-like,  
Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,  
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
A single band of gold about her hair,  
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven: but she  
No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—  
Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me fight,  
Yea, let her see me fall! with that I drave  
Among the thickest and bore down a  
Prince,  
And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my  
dream  
All that I would. But that large-moulded  
man,  
His visage all agrin as at a wake,  
Made at me thro' the press, and, stagger-  
ing back  
With stroke on stroke the horse and horse-  
man, came  
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the  
drains,  
And shadowing down the champaign till  
it strikes  
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and  
cracks, and splits,  
And twists the grain with such a roar that  
Earth  
Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for every-  
thing  
Gave way before him: only Florian, he  
That loved me closer than his own right  
eye,  
Thrust in between; but Arac rode him  
down:  
And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the  
Prince,

With Psyche's colour round his helmet,  
tough,  
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;  
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that  
smote  
And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt my  
veins  
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand  
to hand,  
And sword to sword, and horse to horse  
we hung,  
Till I struck out and shouted; the blade  
glanced,  
I did but shear a feather, and dream and  
truth  
Flow'd from me; darkness closed me; and  
I fell.

### VI

Home they brought her warrior dead:  
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:  
All her maidens, watching, said,  
'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
Truest friend and noblest foe;  
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
Lightly to the warrior slept,  
Took the face-cloth from the face;  
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
Set his child upon her knee—  
Like summer tempest came her tears—  
'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

My dream had never died or lived again.  
As in some mystic middle state I lay;  
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:  
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all  
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,  
That all things grew more tragic and more  
strange;  
That when our side was vanquish'd and  
my cause  
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,  
The Prince is slain. My father heard and  
ran  
In on the lists, and there unlaced my  
casque

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

And grovell'd on my body, and after him  
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
With Psyche's babe in arm: there on the  
    roofs  
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: the  
    seed,  
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they  
    came;  
The leaves were wet with women's tears: they  
    heard  
A noise of songs they would not understand:  
'They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
And would have strown it, and are fall'n them-  
    selves.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they  
    came,  
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!  
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,  
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

'Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they  
    struck;  
With their own blows they hurt themselves,  
    nor knew  
'There dwelt an iron nature in the grain:  
'The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
'Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

'Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power: and  
    roll'd  
With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

'And now, O maids, behold our sanc-  
    tuary  
Is violate, our laws broken: fear we not  
To break them more in their behoof, whose  
    arms  
Champion'd our cause and won it with a  
    day  
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,  
When dames and heroines of the golden  
    year  
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of  
    Spring,  
To rain an April of ovation round

Their statues, borne aloft, the three: but  
    come,  
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.  
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse  
    mankind,  
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these  
The brethren of our blood and cause, that  
    there  
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender minis-  
    tries  
Of female hands and hospitality.'

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her  
    arms,  
Descending, burst the great bronze valves,  
    and led  
A hundred maids in train across the Park.  
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on  
    they came,  
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest: by them  
    went  
The enamour'd air sighing, and on their  
    curls  
From the high tree the blossom wavering  
    fell,

And over them the tremulous isles of light  
Slided, they moving under shade: but  
    Blanche  
At distance follow'd: so they came: anon  
Thro' open field into the lists they wound  
Timorously; and as the leader of the herd  
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,  
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,  
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,  
The lovely, lordly creature floated on  
To where her wounded brethren lay; there  
    stay'd;  
Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,—  
    and prest  
Their hands, and call'd them dear de-  
    liverers,  
And happy warriors, and immortal names,  
And said 'You shall not lie in the tents but  
    here,  
And nursed by those for whom you fought,  
    and served  
With female hands and hospitality.'

Then, whether moved by this, or was it  
    chance,  
She past my way. Up started from my side

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

The old lion, glaring with his whelpless  
eye,  
Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,  
Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly  
pale,  
Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd; and when she  
saw

The haggard father's face and reverend  
beard

Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood  
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain  
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead  
past

A shadow, and her hue changed, and she  
said:

'He saved my life: my brother slew him  
for it.'

No more: at which the king in bitter scorn  
Drew from my neck the painting and the  
tress,

And held them up: she saw them, and a  
day

Rose from the distance on her memory,  
When the good Queen, her mother, shore  
the tress

With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche:  
And then once more she look'd at my pale  
face:

Till understanding all the foolish work  
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
Her iron will was broken in her mind;  
Her noble heart was molten in her breast;  
She bow'd, she set the child on the earth;  
she laid

A feeling finger on my brows, and presently  
'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives: he is not dead:  
O let me have him with my brethren here  
In our own palace: we will tend on him  
Like one of these; if so, by any means,  
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that  
make

Our progress falter to the woman's goal.'

She said: but at the happy word 'he lives'  
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my  
wounds.

So those two foes above my fallen life,  
With brow to brow like night and evening  
mixt

Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever  
stole

A little nearer, till the babe that by us,  
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden  
brede,

Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,  
Uncared for, spied its mother and began  
A blind and babbling laughter, and to  
dance

Its body, and reach its fatling innocent  
arms

And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
Brook'd not, but clamouring out 'Mine—  
mine—not yours,

It is not yours, but mine: give me the  
child'

Ceased all on tremble: piteous was the cry:  
So stood the unhappy mother open-  
mouth'd,

And turn'd each face her way: wan was her  
cheek

With hollow watch, her blooming mantle  
torn,

Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,  
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and  
half

The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
The laces toward her babe; but she nor  
cared

Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,  
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me,  
stood

Erect and silent, striking with her glance  
The mother, me, the child; but he that lay  
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
'Trail'd himself up on one knee: then he  
drew

Her robe to meet his lips, and down she  
look'd

At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it  
seem'd,

Or self-involved; but when she learnt his  
face,

Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose  
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er  
him grew

Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he  
said:

'O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness  
That with your long locks play the Lion's  
mane!

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

But Love and Nature, these are two more  
 terrible  
 And stronger. See, your foot is on our  
 necks,  
 We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.  
 What would you more? give her the child!  
 remain  
 Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,  
 Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:  
 Win you the hearts of women; and beware  
 Lest, where you seek the common love of  
 these,  
 The common hate with the revolving wheel  
 Should drag you down, and some great  
 Nemesis  
 Break from a darken'd future, crown'd  
 with fire,  
 And tread you out for ever: but howsoe'er  
 Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms  
 To hold your own, deny not hers to her.  
 Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep  
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you  
 loved  
 The breast that fed or arm that dandled  
 you,  
 Or own one port of sense not flint to prayer,  
 Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it,  
 Yourself, in hands so lately clasp'd with  
 yours,  
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one  
 fault  
 The tenderness, not yours, that could not  
 kill,  
 Give *me* it: *I* will give it her.'

He said:

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd  
 Dry flame, she listening; after sank and  
 sank  
 And, into mournful twilight mellowing,  
 dwelt  
 Full on the child; she took it: 'Pretty bud!  
 Lily of the vale! half open'd bell of the  
 woods!  
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a  
 world  
 Of traitorous friend and broken system  
 made  
 No purple in the distance, mystery,  
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell;  
 These men are hard upon us as of old,  
 We two must part: and yet how fain was I

To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to  
 think  
 I might be something to thee, when I felt  
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren  
 breast  
 In the dead prime: but may thy mother  
 prove  
 As true to thee as false, false, false to me!  
 And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I  
 wish it  
 Gentle as freedom'—here she kiss'd it:  
 then—  
 'All good go with thee! take it Sir,' and so  
 Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed  
 hands,  
 Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she  
 sprang  
 To meet it, with an eye that swum in  
 thanks;  
 Then felt it sound and whole from head to  
 foot,  
 And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close  
 enough,  
 And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled  
 it,  
 And hid her bosom with it; after that  
 Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

'We two were friends: I go to mine own  
 land

For ever: find some other: as for me  
 I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet  
 speak to me,  
 Say one soft word and let me part forgiven.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.  
 Then Arac. 'Ida'—sdeath! you blame the  
 man;  
 You wrong yourselves—the woman is so  
 hard  
 Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!  
 I am your warrior: I and mine have fought  
 Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she  
 weeps:  
 'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er  
 than see it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,  
 And reddening in the furrows of his chin,  
 And moved beyond his custom, Gama  
 said:

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

'I've heard that there is iron in the blood,  
And I believe it. Not one word? not one?  
Whence drew you this steel temper? not  
from me,

Not from your mother, now a saint with  
saints.

She said you had a heart—I heard her say  
it—

"Our Ida has a heart"—just ere she died—  
"But see that some one with authority  
Be near her still" and I—I sought for one—  
All people said she had authority—

The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not one  
word;

No! tho' your father sues: see how you  
stand

Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights  
maim'd,

I trust that there is no one hurt to death,  
For your wild whim: and was it then for  
this,

Was it for this we gave our palace up,  
Where we withdrew from summer heats  
and state,

And had our wine and chess beneath the  
planes,

And many a pleasant hour with her that's  
gone,

Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?  
Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,  
When first she came, all flush'd you said  
to me

Now had you got a friend of your own age,  
Now could you share your thought; now  
should men see

Two women faster welded in one love  
Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd  
with, she

You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in  
the tower,

Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,  
And right ascension, Heaven knows what;  
and now

A word, but one, one little kindly word,  
Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!  
You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,  
You shame your mother's judgment too.

Not one?

You will not? well—no heart have you, or  
such

As fancies like the vermin in a nut

Have fretted all to dust and bitterness.'  
So said the small king moved beyond his  
wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her  
force

By many a varying influence and so long.  
Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor  
wept:

Her head a little bent; and on her mouth  
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon  
In a still water: then brake out my sire,  
Lifting his grim head from my wounds.

'O you,  
Woman, whom we thought woman even  
now,

And were half fool'd to let you tend our  
son,

Because he might have wish'd it—but we see  
The accomplice of your madness unfor-  
given,

And think that you might mix his draught  
with death,

When your skies change again: the rougher  
hand

Is safer: on to the tents: take up the Prince.'

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd  
to attend

A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd  
her broke

A genial warmth and light once more, and  
shone

Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.  
'Come hither.

O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace me,  
come,

Quick while I melt; make reconciliation  
sure

With one that cannot keep her mind an  
hour:

Come to the hollow heart they slander so!  
Kiss and be friends, like children being  
chid!

I seem no more: I want forgiveness too:  
I should have had to do with none but  
maids,

That have no links with men. Ah false but  
dear,

Dear traitor, too much loved, why?—  
why?—Yet see,



## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Before these kings we embrace you yet  
 once more  
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
 And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire,

Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon  
 him,  
 Like mine own brother. For my debt to  
 him,  
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I  
 know it;  
 Taunt me no more: yourself and yours  
 shall have  
 Free adit; we will scatter all our maids  
 Till happier times each to her proper  
 hearth:  
 What use to keep them here—now? grant  
 my prayer.  
 Help, father, brother, help; speak to the  
 king:  
 Thaw this male nature to some touch of  
 that  
 Which kills me with myself, and drags me  
 down  
 From my fixt height to mob me up with all  
 The soft and milky rabble of womankind,  
 Poor weakling ev'n as they are.'

Passionate tears

Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril said:  
 'Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—ask for  
 him  
 Of your great head—for he is wounded  
 too—  
 That you may tend upon him with the  
 prince.'  
 'Ay so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,  
 'Our laws are broken: let him enter too.'  
 Then Violet, she that sang the mournful  
 song,  
 And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,  
 Petition'd too for him. 'Ay so,' she said,  
 'I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep  
 My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:  
 We break our laws with ease, but let it be.'  
 'Ay so?' said Blanche: 'Amazed am I to  
 hear  
 Your Highness: but your Highness breaks  
 with ease  
 The law your Highness did not make:  
 'twas I.  
 I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,

And block'd them out; but these men came  
 to woo  
 Your Highness—verily I think to win.'

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye:  
 But Ida with a voice, that like a bell  
 Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling  
 tower,  
 Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

'Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one,  
 but all,  
 Not only he, but by my mother's soul,  
 Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,  
 Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,  
 Till the storm die! but had you stood by us,  
 The roar that breaks the Pharos from his  
 base  
 Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,  
 But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your  
 likes.  
 We brook no further insult but are gone.'

She turn'd; the very nape of her white  
 neck  
 Was rosed with indignation: but the Prince  
 Her brother came; the king her father  
 charm'd  
 Her wounded soul with words: nor did  
 mine own  
 Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights,  
 and bare  
 Straight to the doors: to them the doors  
 gave way  
 Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd  
 The virgin marble under iron heels:  
 And on they moved and gain'd the hall,  
 and there  
 Rested: but great the crush was, and each  
 base,  
 To left and right, of those tall columns  
 drown'd  
 In silken fluctuation and the swarm  
 Of female whisperers: at the further end  
 Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats  
 Close by her, like supporters on a shield,  
 Bow-back'd with fear: but in the centre  
 stood  
 The common men with rolling eyes;  
 amazed

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

They glared upon the women, and aghast  
The women stared at these, all silent, save  
When armour clasn'd or jingled, while the  
day,

Descending, struck athwart the hall, and  
shot

A flying splendour out of brass and steel,  
That o'er the statues leapt from head to  
head,

Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,  
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,  
And now and then an echo started up,  
And shuddering fled from room to room,  
and died

Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice  
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance:  
And met they bore up the broad stairs, and  
thro'

The long-laid galleries past a hundred  
doors

To one deep chamber shut from sound,  
and due

To languid limbs and sickness; left me  
in it;

And others elsewhere they laid; and all  
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof  
And chariot, many a maiden passing home  
Till happier times; but some were left of  
those

Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,  
From those two hosts that lay beside the  
walls,

Walk'd at their will, and everything was  
changed.

### VII

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;  
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take  
the shape

With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;  
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?  
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:  
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!  
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:  
I strove against the stream and all in vain:  
Let the great river take me to the main:  
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;  
Ask me no more.

So was their sanctuary violated,  
So their fair college turn'd to hospital;  
At first with all confusion: by and by  
Sweet order lived again with other laws:  
A kindlier influence reign'd; and every-  
where

Low voices with the ministering hand  
Hung round the sick: the maidens came,  
they talk'd,

They sang, they read: till she not fair began  
To gather light, and she that was, became  
Her former beauty treble; and to and fro  
With books, with flowers, with Angel  
offices,

Like creatures native unto gracious act,  
And in their own clear element, they  
moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent with  
shame.

Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke: but  
oft

Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for  
hours

On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men  
Darkening her female field: void was her  
use,

And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great black  
cloud

Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of  
night,

Blot out the slope of sea from verge to  
shore,

And suck the blinding splendour from the  
sand,

And quenching lake by lake and tarn by  
tarn

Expunge the world: so fared she gazing  
there;

So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank  
And waste it seem'd and vain; till down  
she came,

And found fair peace once more among the  
sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by morn  
the lark

Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,  
but I

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:  
And twilight gloom'd; and broader-grown  
the bowers  
Drew the great night into themselves, and  
Heaven,  
Star after star, arose and fell; but I,  
Deeper than those weird doubts could  
reach me, lay  
Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,  
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the  
hand  
That nursed me, more than infants in their  
sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with her oft,  
Melissa came; for Blanche had gone, but  
left  
Her child among us, willing she should  
keep  
Court-favour: here and there the small  
bright head,  
A light of healing, glanced about the couch,  
Or thro' the parted silks the tender face  
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man  
With blush and smile, a medicine in them-  
selves  
To wile the length from languorous hours,  
and draw  
The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange  
that soon  
He rose up whole, and those fair charities  
Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd that  
hearts  
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in  
love,  
Than when two dewdrops on the petal  
shake  
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper  
down,  
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit ob-  
tain'd  
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had  
sworn  
That after that dark night among the fields  
She needs must wed him for her own good  
name;  
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored;  
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but  
fear'd

To incense the Head once more; till on a day  
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind  
Seen but of Psyche: on her foot she hung  
A moment, and she heard, at which her face  
A little flush'd, and she past on; but each  
Assumed from thence a half-consent in-  
volved  
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at  
peace.

Nor only these: Love in the sacred halls  
Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
With showers of random sweet on maid  
and man.  
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,  
Nor did mine own, now reconciled; nor yet  
Did those twin brothers, risen again and  
whole;  
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat:  
Then came a change; for sometimes I  
would catch  
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek  
'You are not Ida;' clasp it once again,  
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,  
And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
And call her hard and cold which seem'd  
a truth:  
And still she fear'd that I should lose my  
mind,  
And often she believed that I should die:  
Till out of long frustration of her care,  
And pensive tendance in the all-weary  
noons,  
And watches in the dead, the dark, when  
clocks  
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors,  
or call'd  
On flying Time from all their silver  
tongues—  
And out of memories of her kindlier days,  
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,  
And at the happy lovers heart in heart—  
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,  
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd  
dream,  
And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
And wordless broodings on the wasted  
cheek—

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

From all a closer interest flourish'd up,  
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to  
these,  
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with  
tears  
By some cold morning glacier; frail at first  
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
But such as gather'd colour ~~day~~ by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to  
death  
For weakness: it was evening: silent light  
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were  
wrought  
Two grand designs; for on one side arose  
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd  
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they  
cramm'd  
The forum, and half-crush'd among the  
rest  
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other  
side  
Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,  
A train of dames: by axe and eagle sat,  
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman  
scowls,  
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their  
veins,  
The fierce triumvirs; and before them  
paused  
Hortensia pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:  
They did but look like hollow shows; nor  
more  
Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the dew  
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape  
And rounder seem'd: I moved: I sigh'd: a  
touch  
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my  
hand:  
Then all for languor and self-pity ran  
Mine down my face, and with what life I  
had,  
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,  
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,  
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her  
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisper-  
ingly:

'If you be, what I think you, some sweet  
dream,

I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:  
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,  
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die  
to-night.  
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.'

I could no more, but lay like one in  
trance,  
That hears his burial talk'd of by his  
friends,  
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one  
sign,  
But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd;  
she paused;  
She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a cry;  
Leapt fiery Passion from the brink of  
death;  
And I believed that in the living world  
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;  
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she  
rose  
Glowing all over noble shame; and all  
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,  
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood  
Than in her mould that other, when she  
came  
From barren deeps to conquer all with  
love;  
And down the streaming crystal dropt; and  
she  
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
Naked, a double light in air and wave,  
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd  
her out  
For worship without end; nor end of mine,  
Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided  
forth,  
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and  
slept,  
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy  
sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near me,  
held  
A volume of the Poets of her land:  
There to herself, all in low tones, she read.

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;  
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;  
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:  
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,  
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,  
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake:  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

I heard her turn the page; she found a small  
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read:

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:  
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)  
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?  
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;  
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down  
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk  
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,  
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
'To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:  
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down  
'To find him in the valley; let the wild  
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave  
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill  
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,

That like a broken purpose waste in air:  
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales  
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth  
Arise to thee: the children call, and I  
'Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,  
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;  
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes  
I lay  
Listening; then look'd. Pale was the perfect face;  
The bosom with long sighs labour'd; and meek

Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,

And the voice trembled and the hand. She said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd  
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;  
That all her labour was but as a block  
Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,  
She still were loth to yield herself to one  
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights

Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.

She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her

That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power

In knowledge: something wild within her breast,

A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.

And she had nursed me there from week to week:

Much had she learnt in little time. In part  
It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a girl—  
'Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce!

When comes another such? never, I think,  
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs.'

Her voice  
Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,  
And her great heart thro' all the faultful Past

Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;

Till notice of a change in the dark world  
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,  
That early woke to feed her little ones,  
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:  
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

'Blame not thyself too much,' I said,  
'nor blame

Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;

These were the rough ways of the world till now.

Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink

Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free:  
For she that out of Lethe scales with man  
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man

His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,

Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—

If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
How shall men grow? but work no more alone!

Our place is much: as far as in us lies  
We two will serve them both in aiding her—

Will clear away the parasitic forms  
That seem to keep her up but drag her down—

Will leave her space to burgeon out of all  
Within her—let her make herself her own  
To give or keep, to live and learn and be  
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.  
For woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse: could we make her as the man,  
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,

Not like to like, but like in difference.  
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;  
The man be more of woman, she of man;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;

She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,

Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;  
Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words;  
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,

Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,

Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,  
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,  
Distinct in individualities,  
But like each other ev'n as those who love.  
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:  
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:

Then springs the crowning race of human-kind.

May these things be!

Sighing she spoke 'I fear

They will not.'

'Dear, but let us type them now  
In our own lives, and this proud watch-word rest

Of equal; seeing either sex alone  
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils  
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,

Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
The single pure and perfect animal,  
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,  
Life.'

And again sighing she spoke: 'A dream  
That once was mine! what woman taught you this?'

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than I know,  
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,

I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives  
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,  
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime:

Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one  
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,

Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet  
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce

Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,

And girdled her with music. Happy he  
With such a mother! faith in womankind  
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high

Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall

He shall not blind his soul with clay.'

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike—  
It seems you love to cheat yourself with  
words:

This mother is your model. I have heard  
Of your strange doubts: they well might  
be: I seem

A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince;  
You cannot love me.'

'Nay but thee' I said  
'From yearlong poring on thy pictured  
eyes,

Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and  
saw

Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods  
That mask'd thee from men's reverence  
up, and forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood:  
now,

Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee,  
Indeed I love: the new day comes, the  
light

Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults  
Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts are  
dead,

My haunting sense of hollow shows: the  
change,

This truthful change in thee has kill'd it.  
Dear,

Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,  
Like yonder morning on the blind half-  
world;

Approach and fear not; breathe upon my  
brows;

In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and  
this

Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come  
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland  
reels

Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. For-  
give me,

I waste my heart in signs: let be. My bride,  
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,  
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
And so thro' those dark gates across the  
wild

That no man knows. Indeed I love thee:  
come,

Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are  
one:

'But I,' Accomplish thou my manhood and thy-  
self;

Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust  
to me.'

### CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you all  
The random scheme as wildly as it rose:  
The words are mostly mine; for when we  
ceased

There came a minute's pause, and Walter  
said,

'I wish she had not yielded!' then to me,  
'What, if you drest it up poetically!'

So pray'd the men, the women: I gave  
assent:

Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of  
seven

Together in one sheaf? What style could  
suit?

The men required that I should give  
throughout

The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,  
With which we banter'd little Lilia first:  
The women—and perhaps they felt their  
power,

For something in the ballads which they  
sang,

Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,  
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn  
close—

They hated banter, wish'd for something  
real,

A gallant fight, a noble princess—why  
Not make her true-heroic—true-sublime?  
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?  
Which yet with such a framework scarce  
could be.

Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,  
Betwixt the mockers and the realists:

And I, betwixt them both, to please them  
both,

And yet to give the story as it rose,  
I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
And maybe neither pleased myself nor  
them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no  
part

In our dispute: the sequel of the tale

## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

Had touch'd her; and she sat, she pluck'd  
the grass,  
She flung it from her, thinking: last, she fixt  
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,  
'You—tell us what we are' who might have  
told,  
For she was cramm'd with theories out of  
books,  
But that there rose a shout: the gates were  
closed  
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming  
now,  
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we  
climb'd  
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw  
The happy valleys, half in light, and half  
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of  
peace;  
Gray halls alone among their massive  
groves;  
Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower  
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of  
wheat;  
The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the  
seas;  
A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,  
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of  
• France.

'Look there, a garden!' said my college  
friend,  
The Tory member's elder son, 'and there!  
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her  
off,  
And keep our Britain, whole within herself,  
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—  
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,  
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have  
made,  
Some patient force to change them when  
we will,  
Some civic manhood firm against the  
crowd—  
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden  
heat,  
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,  
The king is scared, the soldier will not  
fight,

The little boys begin to shoot and stab,  
A kingdom topples over with a shriek  
Like an old woman, and down rolls the  
world  
In mock heroics stranger than our own;  
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
No graver than a schoolboys' barring out;  
Too comic for the solemn things they are,  
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,  
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream  
As some of theirs—God bless the narrow  
seas!  
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.'

'Have patience,' I replied, 'ourselves are  
full  
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams  
Are but the needful preludes of the truth:  
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,  
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith.  
This fine old world of ours is but a  
child  
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time  
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that  
guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the garden  
rails,  
And there we saw Sir Walter where he  
stood,  
Before a tower of crimson holly-hoaks,  
Among six boys, head under head, and  
look'd  
No little lily-handed Baronet he,  
A great broad-shoulder'd genial English-  
man,  
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,  
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
A patron of some thirty charities,  
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,  
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;  
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;  
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of  
those  
That stood the nearest—now address'd to  
speech—  
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as  
closed  
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the  
year  
To follow: a shout rose again, and made



## THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

The long line of the approaching rookery  
swerve

From the elms, and shook the branches of  
the deer

From slope to slope thro' distant ferns,  
and rang

Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout  
More joyful than the city-roar that hails  
Premier or king! Why should not these  
great Sirs

Give up their parks some dozen times a  
year

To let the people breathe? So thrice they  
cried,

I likewise, and in groups they stream'd  
away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and  
sat on,  
So much the gathering darkness charm'd:  
we sat

But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,  
Perchance upon the future man: the  
walls

Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls  
whoop'd,

And gradually the powers of the night,  
That range above the region of the wind,  
Deepening the courts of twilight broke  
them up

Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,  
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of  
Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir  
Ralph

From those rich silks, and home well-  
pleased we went.

### ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

PUBLISHED IN 1852

#### I

BURY the Great Duke

With an empire's lamentation,

Let us bury the Great Duke

To the noise of the mourning of a mighty  
nation,

Mourning when their leaders fall,  
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

#### II

Where shall we lay the man whom we  
deplora?

Here, in streaming London's central roar.  
Let the sound of those he wrought for,  
And the feet of those he fought for,  
Echo round his bones for evermore.

#### III

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,  
As fits an universal woe,  
Let the long procession go,  
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow  
And let the mournful martial music blow;  
The last great Englishman is low.

#### IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.  
No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.  
Our friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:  
Mourn for the man of long-enduring  
blood,

The statesman-warrior, moderate, reso-  
lute,

Whole in himself, a common good.  
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
Great in council and great in war,  
Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common-sense,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime.

O good gray head which all men knew,  
O voice from which their omens all men  
drew,

O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fall'n at length that tower of strength  
Which stood four-square to all the winds  
that blew!

Such was he whom we deplore.  
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
The great World-victor's victor will be  
seen no more.

# ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

V

All is over and done:  
 Render thanks to the Giver,  
 England, for thy son.  
 Let the bell be toll'd.  
 Render thanks to the Giver,  
 And render him to the mould.  
 Under the cross of gold  
 That shines over city and river,  
 There he shall rest for ever  
 Among the wise and the bold.  
 Let the bell be toll'd:  
 And a reverent people behold  
 The towering car, the sable steeds:  
 Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,  
 Dark in its funeral fold.  
 Let the bell be toll'd:  
 And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;  
 And the sound of the sorrowing anthem  
 roll'd  
 Thro' the dome of the golden cross;  
 And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;  
 He knew their voices of old.  
 For many a time in many a clime  
 His captain's-ear has heard them boom  
 Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:  
 When he with those deep voices wrought,  
 Guarding realms and kings from shame;  
 With those deep voices our dead captain  
 taught  
 The tyrant, and assert his claim  
 In that dread sound to the great name,  
 Which he has worn so pure of blame,  
 In praise and in dispraise the same,  
 A man of well-attemper'd frame.  
 O civic muse, to such a name,  
 To such a name for ages long,  
 To such a name,  
 Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
 And ever-echoing avenues of song.

VI

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd  
 guest,  
 With banner and with music, with soldier  
 and with priest,  
 With a nation weeping, and breaking on  
 my rest?  
 Mighty Seaman, this is he  
 Was great by land as thou by sea.

Thine island loves thee well, thou famous  
 man,  
 The greatest sailor since our world began.  
 Now, to the roll of muffled drums,  
 To thee the greatest soldier comes;  
 For this is he  
 Was great by land as thou by sea;  
 His foes were thine; he kept us free;  
 O give him welcome, this is he  
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,  
 And worthy to be laid by thee;  
 For this is England's greatest son,  
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,  
 Nor ever lost an English gun;  
 This is he that far away  
 Against the myriads of Assaye  
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won;  
 And underneath another sun,  
 Warring on a later day,  
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
 The treble works, the vast designs  
 Of his labour'd rampart-lines,  
 Where he greatly stood at bay,  
 Whence he issued forth anew,  
 And ever great and greater grew,  
 Beating from the wasted vines  
 Back to France her banded swarms,  
 Back to France with countless blows,  
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,  
 Follow'd up in valley and glen  
 With blare of bugle, clamour of men,  
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
 And England pouring on her foes.  
 Such a war had such a close.  
 Again their ravening eagle rose  
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing  
 wings,  
 And barking for the thrones of kings;  
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown  
 On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler  
 down;  
 A day of onsets of despair!  
 Dash'd on every rocky square  
 Their surging charges foam'd themselves  
 away;  
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;  
 Thro' the long-tormented air  
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
 And down we swept and charged and  
 overthrew.

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

So great a soldier taught us there,  
 What long-enduring hearts could do  
 In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!  
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,  
 And pure as he from taint of craven guile,  
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
 If aught of things that here befall  
 Touch a spirit among things divine,  
 If love of country move thee there at all,  
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!  
 And thro' the centuries let a people's voice  
 In full acclaim,  
 A people's voice,  
 The proof and echo of all human fame,  
 A people's voice, when they rejoice  
 At civic revel and pomp and game,  
 Attest their great commander's claim  
 With honour, honour, honour, honour to  
     him,  
 Eternal honour to his name.

### VII

A people's voice! we are a people yet.  
 Tho' all men else their nobler dreams  
     forget,  
 Confused by brainless mobs and lawless  
     Powers;  
 Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly  
     set  
 His Briton in blown seas and storming  
     showers,  
 We have a voice, with which to pay the debt  
 Of boundless love and reverence and regret  
 To those great men who fought, and kept it  
     ours.  
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute  
     control;  
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the  
     soul  
 Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,  
 And save the one true seed of freedom  
     sown  
 Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,  
 That sober freedom out of which there  
     springs  
 Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;  
 For, saving that, ye help to save mankind  
 Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
 And drill the raw world for the march of  
     mind,

Till crowds at length be sane and crowns  
     be just.  
 But wink no more in slothful overtrust.  
 Remember him who led your hosts;  
 He had you guard the sacred coasts.  
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward  
     wall;  
 His voice is silent in your council-hall  
 For ever; and whatever tempests lour  
 For ever silent; even if they broke  
 In thunder, silent; yet remember all  
 He spoke among you, and the Man who  
     spoke;  
 Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,  
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;  
 Who let the turbid streams of rumour  
     flow  
 Thro' either babbling world of high and  
     low;  
 Whose life was work, whose language rife  
 With rugged maxims hewn from life;  
 Who never spoke against a foe;  
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one  
     rebuke  
 All great self-seekers trampling on the  
     right:  
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred  
     named;  
 Truth-lover was our English Duke;  
 Whatever record leap to light  
 He never shall be shamed.

### VIII

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
 He, on whom from both her open hands  
 Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,  
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.  
 Yea, let all good things await  
 Him who cares not to be great,  
 But as he saves or serves the state.  
 Not once or twice in our rough island-  
     story,  
 The path of duty was the way to glory:  
 He that walks it, only thirsting  
 For the right, and learns to deaden  
 Love of self, before his journey closes,  
 He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting  
 Into glossy purples, which outreddened  
 All voluptuous garden-roses.

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

Not once or twice in our fair island-story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory:  
He, that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has  
won

His path upward, and prevail'd,  
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty  
scaled

Are close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and  
sun.

Such was he: his work is done.  
But while the races of mankind endure,  
Let his great example stand  
Colossal, seen of every land,  
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman  
pure:

Till in all lands and thro' all human story  
The path of duty be the way to glory:  
And let the land whose hearths he saved  
from shame

For many and many an age proclaim  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
And when the long-illuminated cities flame,  
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,  
With honour, honour, honour, honour to  
him,

Eternal honour to his name.

### IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see:  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one about whose patriarchal knee  
Late the little children clung:  
O peace, it is a day of pain  
For one, upon whose hand and heart and  
brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.  
Ours the pain, be his the gain!  
More than is of man's degree  
Must be with us, watching here  
At this, our great solemnity.  
Whom we see not we revere;  
We revere, and we refrain  
From talk of battles loud and vain,  
And brawling memories all too free  
For such a wise humility  
As befits a solemn fane:

We revere, and while we hear  
The tides of Music's golden sea  
Setting toward eternity,  
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
Until we doubt not that for one so true  
There must be other nobler work to do  
Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
And Victor he must ever be.

For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
And break the shore, and evermore  
Make and break, and work their will;  
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads  
roll

Round us, each with different powers,  
And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the soul?  
On God and Godlike men we build our  
trust.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's  
ears:

The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs  
and tears:

The black earth yawns: the mortal dis-  
appears;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;  
He is gone who seem'd so great.—  
Gone; but nothing can bereave him  
Of the force he made his own  
Being here, and we believe him  
Something far advanced in State,  
And that he wears a truer crown  
Than any wreath that man can weave him.  
Speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave him,  
God accept him, Christ receive him.

1852.

## THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY

1852

MY Lords, we heard you speak: you told  
us all

That England's honest censure went too  
far;

That our free press should cease to brawl,  
Not sting the fiery Frenchman into war.  
It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,  
To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing, into  
words.

## THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY, 1852

We love not this French God, the child of Hell,  
Wild War, who breaks the converse of the wise;  
But though we love kind Peace so well,  
We dare not ev'n by silence sanction lies.  
It might be safe our censures to withdraw;  
And yet, my Lords, not well: there is a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak free,  
Tho' all the storm of Europe on us break;  
No little German state are we,  
But the one voice in Europe: we *must* speak;  
That if to-night our greatness were struck dead,  
There might be left some record of the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be bold.  
Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant o'er.  
Better the waste Atlantic roll'd  
On her and us and ours for evermore.  
What! have we fought for Freedom from our prime,  
At last to dodge and palter with a public crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never fear'd.  
From our first Charles by force we wrung our claims.  
Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,  
We flung the burthen of the second James.  
I say, we *never* feared! and as for these,  
We broke them on the land, we drove them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the people muse  
In doubt if you be of our Barons' breed—  
Were those your sires who fought at Lewes?  
Is this the manly strain of Runnymede?  
O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,  
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of this monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here were sin,  
Not ours the fault if we have feeble hosts—  
If easy patrons of their kin

Have left the last free race with naked coasts!  
They knew the precious things they had to guard:  
For us, we will not spare the tyrant one hard word.  
Tho' niggard throats of Manchester may bawl,  
What England was, shall her true sons forget?  
We are not cotton-spinners all,  
But some love England and her honour yet.  
And these in our Thermopylæ shall stand,  
And hold against the world this honour of the land.

## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

### I

HALF a leaguc, half a leaguc,  
Half a leaguc onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
'Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns!' he said:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

### II

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'  
Was there a man dismay'd?  
Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd:  
Their's not to make reply,  
Their's not to reason why,  
Their's but to do and die:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

### III

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

### IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wonder'd:  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro' the line they broke;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back, but not,  
Not the six hundred.

### V

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
Left of six hundred.

### VI

When can their glory fade?  
O the wild charge they made!  
All the world wonder'd.  
Honour the charge they made!  
Honour the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred!

## ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

### I

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and sweet,  
In this wide hall with earth's invention  
stored,  
And praise the invisible universal Lord,  
Who lets once more in peace the nations  
meet,  
Where Science, Art, and Labour have  
outpour'd  
Their myriad horns of plenty at our feet.

### II

O silent father of our Kings to be  
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,  
For this, for all, we weep our thanks to  
thee!

### III

The world-compelling plan was thine,—  
And, lo! the long laborious miles  
Of Palace; lo! the giant aisles,  
Rich in model and design;  
Harvest-tool and husbandry,  
Loom and wheel and engine,  
Secrets of the sullen mine,  
Steel and gold, and corn and wine,  
Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,  
Sunny tokens of the Line,  
Polar marvels, and a feast  
Of wonder, out of West and East,  
And shapes and hues of Art divine!  
All of beauty, all of use,  
That one fair planet can produce,  
Brought from under every star,  
Blown from over every main,  
And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,  
The works of peace with works of war.

### IV

Is the goal so far away?  
Far, how far no tongue can say,  
Let us dream our dream to-day.

### V

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who  
reign,  
From growing commerce loose her latest  
chain,  
And let the fair white-wing'd peacemaker  
fly  
To happy havens under all the sky,  
And mix the seasons and the golden hours;  
Till each man find his own in all men's  
good,  
And all men work in noble brotherhood,  
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed  
towers,  
And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,  
And gathering all the fruits of earth and  
crown'd with all her flowers.

## A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

### A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

MARCH 7, 1863

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the sea,  
Alexandra!

Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee,  
Alexandra!

Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet!  
Welcome her, thundering cheer of the  
street!

Welcome her, all things youthful and sweet,  
Scatter the blossom under her feet!  
Break, happy land, into earlier flowers!  
Make music, O bird, in the new-budded  
bowers!

Blazon your mottoes of blessing and  
prayer!

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is ours!  
Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!  
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers!  
Flames, on the windy headland flare!  
Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!  
Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air!  
Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!  
Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and higher  
Melt into stars for the land's desire!  
Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,  
Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the strand,  
Roar as the sea when he welcomes the land,  
And welcome her, welcome the land's  
desire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,  
Blissful bride of a blissful heir,  
Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea—  
O joy to the people and joy to the throne,  
Come to us, love us and make us your own:  
For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,  
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,  
We are each all Dane in our welcome of  
thee, Alexandra!

### A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS MARIE ALEXANDROVNA DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH

MARCH 7, 1874

#### I

THE Son of him with whom we strove for  
power—

Whose will is lord thro' all his world-  
domain—

Who made the serf a man, and burst his  
chain—

Has given our Prince his own imperial  
Flower,

Alexandrovna.

And welcome, Russian flower, a people's  
pride,

To Britain, when her flowers begin to  
blow!

From love to love, from home to home  
you go,

From mother unto mother, stately bride,  
Marie Alexandrovna!

#### II

The golden news along the steppes is  
blown,

And at thy name the Tartar tents are  
stirr'd;

Elburz and all the Caucasus have heard;  
And all the sultry palms of India known,  
Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea  
On capes of Afric as on cliffs of Kent,  
The Maoris and that Isle of Continent,  
And loyal pines of Canada murmur thee,  
Marie Alexandrovna!

#### III

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty  
life!—

Yet Harold's England fell to Norman  
swords;

Yet thine own land has bow'd to Tartar  
hordes

Since English Harold gave its throne a  
wife,

Alexandrovna!

For thrones and peoples are as waifs that  
swing,

And float or fall, in endless ebb and flow;  
But who love best have best the grace to  
know

That Love by right divine is deathless king,  
Marie Alexandrovna!

## A WELCOME TO MARIE ALEXANDROVNA

### IV

And Love has led thee to the stranger land,  
Where men are bold and strongly say  
their say;—

See, empire upon empire smiles to-day,  
As thou with thy young lover hand in  
hand,

Alexandrovna!

So now thy fuller life is in the west,  
Whose hand at home was gracious to thy  
poor:

Thy name was blest within the narrow  
door;

Here also, Marie, shall thy name be blest,  
Marie Alexandrovna!

### V

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame again?  
Or at thy coming, Princess, everywhere,  
The blue heaven break, and some  
diviner air

Breathe thro' the world and change the  
hearts of men,

Alexandrovna?

But hearts that change not, love that can-  
not cease,

And peace be yours, the peace of soul in  
soul!

And howsoever this wild world may roll,  
Between your peoples truth and manful  
peace,

Alfred—Alexandrovna!

## THE GRANDMOTHER

### I

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?  
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.  
And Willy's wife has written: she never was over-wise,  
Never the wife for Willy: he wouldn't take my advice.

### II

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,  
Hadn't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.  
Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was against it for one.  
Eh!—but he wouldn't hear me—and Willy, you say, is gone.

### III

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock;  
Never a man could fling him: for Willy stood like a rock.  
'Here's a leg for a babe of a week!' says doctor; and he would be bound,  
There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

### IV

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue!  
I ought to have gone before him: I wonder he went so young.  
I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have not long to stay;  
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

### V

Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold;  
But all my children have gone before me, I am so old:  
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.



## THE GRANDMOTHER

### VI

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,  
All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.  
I mean your grandfather, Annie: it cost me a world of woe,  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

### VII

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well  
That Jenny had tript in her time: I knew, but I would not tell.  
And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar!  
But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

### VIII

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,  
That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,  
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,  
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

### IX

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day;  
And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle of May.  
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been!  
But soiling another, Annie, will never make oneself clean.

### X

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an evening late  
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate.  
The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,  
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrup the nightingale.

### XI

All of a sudden he stopt: there past by the gate of the farm,  
Willy,—he didn't see me,—and Jenny hung on his arm.  
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how;  
Ah, there's no fool like the old one—it makes me angry now.

### XII

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant;  
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking curtsy and went.  
And I said, 'Let us part: in a hundred years it'll all be the same,  
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name.'

### XIII

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine:  
'Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.  
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill;  
But marry me out of hand: we two shall be happy still.'

## THE GRANDMOTHER

### XIV

'Marry you, Willy!' said I, 'but I needs must speak my mind,  
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind.'  
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, 'No, love, no;'  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

### XV

So Willy and I were wedded: I wore a lilac gown;  
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.  
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,  
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

### XVI

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.  
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath.  
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife;  
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life.

### XVII

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain:  
I look'd at the still little body—his trouble had all been in vain.  
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn:  
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was born.

### XVIII

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay:  
Kind, like a man, was he; like a man, too, would have his way:  
Never jealous—not he: we had many a happy year;  
And he died, and I could not weep—my own time seem'd so near.

### XIX

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died:  
I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.  
And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget:  
But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

### XX

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,  
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you:  
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,  
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

### XXI

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too—they sing to their team:  
Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.  
They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed—  
I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

## THE GRANDMOTHER

### XXII

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive;  
For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five:  
And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten;  
I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

### XXIII

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve;  
I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve:  
And the neighbours come and laugh and gossip, and so do I;  
I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

### XXIV

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad:  
But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had;  
And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease;  
And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

### XXV

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,  
And happy has been my life; but I would not live it again.  
I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

### XXVI

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower;  
But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour,—  
Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next;  
I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vexed?

### XXVII

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.  
Get me my glasses, Annie: thank God that I keep my eyes.  
There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.  
But stay with the old woman now: you cannot have long to stay.

## NORTHERN FARMER

### OLD STYLE

#### I

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän?  
Noorse? thourt nowt o' a noorse: whoy, Doctor's abean an' agoän:  
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aale: but I beänt a fool:  
Git ma my aale, fur I beant a-gawin' to break my rule.

#### II

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways true:  
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.  
I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere.  
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

## NORTHERN FARMER. OLD STYLE

### III

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.  
'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you' to 'issén, my friend,' a said,  
An' a tow'd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;  
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

### IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reskons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.  
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.  
Thaw a knaws I hallus voated wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staate,  
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raite.

### V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's chooch afoor moy Sally wur deäð,  
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock<sup>2</sup> ower my 'ead,  
An' I niver knaw'd whot a mean'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,  
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaay.

### VI

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.  
Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.  
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understood;  
I done moy duty boy 'um as I 'a done boy the lond.

### VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it cäsy an' freeä  
'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,' says 'eä.  
I weant saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste:  
But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a wecak, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

### VIII

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then;  
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysen;  
Moast loike a butter-bump,<sup>3</sup> fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,  
But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raaved an' rembled 'um out.

### IX

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce  
Down i' the woild 'emies<sup>4</sup> afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.  
Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner<sup>5</sup> 'ed shot 'um as deäð as a naäil.  
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma my aäle.

### X

Dubbut looök at the waäste: theer warn't not feeäð for a cow;  
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now—  
Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o' feeäð,  
Fourscoor<sup>1</sup> yows upon it an' some on it down i' seeäð.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ou as in hour.   <sup>2</sup> Cockchafer.   <sup>3</sup> Bittern.   <sup>4</sup> Anemones.   <sup>5</sup> One or other.   <sup>6</sup> Clover.

## NORTHERN FARMER. OLD STYLE

### XI

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meán'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,  
Done it ta-year I meán'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,  
If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloân,  
Mea, wi' haate hoonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an' lond o' my oân.

### XII

Do godamoighty know what a's doing a-taäkin' o' mea?  
I beant wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a pea;  
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear a' dear!  
And I 'a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

### XIII

A mowt 'a taaen owd Joanes, as 'ant not a aapoth o' sense,  
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins—a niver mended a fence:  
But goadamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taake ma now  
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoalms to plow!

### XIV

Loook 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,  
Says to thessén naw doubt 'what a man a beä sewer-loy!'  
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All;  
I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

### XV

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,  
For whoa's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;  
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to Joanes,  
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins—a niver rembles the stoans.

### XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steam  
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Devil's oân teäm.  
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,  
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abear to see it.

### XVII

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aäle?  
Doctor's a 'toattler, lass, an a's halus i' the owd taale;  
I weant break rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy;  
Git ma my aäle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

## NORTHERN FARMER

### NEW STYLE

#### I

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?  
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.  
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass for thy paains:  
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braains.

## NORTHERN FARMER. NEW STYLE

### II

Woa—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam: yon's parson's 'ouse—  
Dosn't thou knaw that a man mun be eather a man or a mouse?  
Time to think on it then; for thou'll be twenty to weecäk.<sup>1</sup>  
Proputty, proputty—woa then woa—let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

### III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as bean a-talkin' o' thee;  
Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin' it me.  
Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's lass—  
Noä—thou'll marry for luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

### IV

Seeä'd her todaäy goä by—Saäint's-daay—they was ringing the bells.  
She's a beauty thou thinks—an' soä is scoors o' gells,  
Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?—the flower as blows.  
But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

### V

Do'ant be stunt:<sup>2</sup> taäke time: I knaws what maakes tha sa mad.  
Warn't I craazed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?  
But I knaw'd a Quaaker feller as often 'as tow'd ma this:  
'Doänt thou marry for munny, but goa wheer munny is!

### VI

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy muther coom to 'and,  
Wi' lots o' munny laaid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.  
Maaybe she warn't a beauty:—I niver giv it a thowt—  
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

### VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deä'd,  
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle<sup>3</sup> her breä'd:  
Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weant niver git hissen clear,  
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shere.

### VIII

'An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,  
Stook to his taail they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.  
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shuvv,  
Woorse nor a far-welter'd<sup>4</sup> yowe: fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

### IX

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,  
Maakin' 'em goä togither as they've good right to do.  
Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaid by?  
Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it: reäson why.

<sup>1</sup> This week.

<sup>2</sup> Obstinate.

<sup>3</sup> Earn.

<sup>4</sup> Or fow-welter'd,—said of a sheep lying on its back.

## NORTHERN FARMER. NEW STYLE

### X

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,  
Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boath on us thinks tha an ass.  
Woà then, proputtu, wiltha?—an ass as near as mays nowt<sup>1</sup>—  
Woà then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees is as fell as owt.<sup>2</sup>

### XI

Break me a bit o' the esh for his 'ead, lad, out o' the fence!  
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?  
Proputtu, proputtu's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest  
If it isn't the saàme opp yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

### XII

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,  
Them as 'as coats to their backs an' taäkes their regular meals.  
Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.  
Taake my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

### XIII

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a bean a laäzy lot,  
Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.  
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways 'is munny was 'id.  
But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an' 'e died a good un, 'e did.

### XIV

Loook thou theer wheer Wigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill!  
Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;  
An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see;  
And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

### XV

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick;  
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick.—  
Coom oop, proputtu, proputtu—that's what I 'ears 'im saäy—  
Proputtu, proputtu, canter an' canter awaäy.

<sup>1</sup> Makes nothing.

<sup>2</sup> The flies are as fierce as anything.

## THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,  
In lands of palm and southern pine;  
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,  
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia show'd  
In ruin, by the mountain road;  
How like a gem, beneath, the city  
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell  
The torrent vineyard streaming fell

To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew  
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;  
Where, here and there, on sandy beaches  
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,  
Yet present in his natal grove,

## THE DAISY

Now watching high on mountain cornice,  
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;  
Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,  
Not the clipt palm of which they boast;  
But distant colour, happy hamlet,  
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
A light amid its olives green;  
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;  
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;  
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten  
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,  
Those niched shapes of noble mould,  
A princely people's awful princes,  
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,  
In those long galleries, were ours;  
What drives about the fresh Cascinè,  
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,  
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain  
Remember what a plague of rain;  
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma;  
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles;  
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom, the  
glory!  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!

I climb'd the roofs at break of day;  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.  
I stood among the silent statues,  
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,  
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there  
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys  
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last  
To Como; shower and storm and blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,  
And all was flooded; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,  
The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,  
As on The Lariano crept  
To that fair port below the castle  
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake  
A cypress in the moonlight shake,  
The moonlight touching o'er a terrace  
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,  
And up the snowy Splügen drew,  
But ere we reach'd the highest summit  
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,  
And now it tells of Italy.  
O love, we two shall go no longer  
To lands of summer across the sea;

So dear a life your arms enfold  
Whose crying is a cry for gold:  
Yet here to-night in this dark city,  
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,  
This nurseling of another sky  
Still in the little book you lent me,  
And where you tenderly laid it by:

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth  
The bitter east, the misty summer  
And gray metropolis of the North.



## THE DAISY

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,  
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,  
Perchance, to dream you still beside me,  
My fancy fled to the South again.

### TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
Godfather, come and see your boy:  
Your presence will be sun in winter,  
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,  
Who give the Fiend himself his due,  
Should eighty-thousand college-councils  
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite  
At you, so careful of the right,  
Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome  
(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,  
I watch the twilight falling brown

All round a careless-order'd garden  
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,  
But honest talk and wholesome wine,  
And only hear the magpie gossip  
Garrulous under a roof of pine:

For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand;  
And further on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
And on thro' zones of light and shadow  
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
Which made a selfish war begin;  
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances;  
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win:

Or whether war's avenging rod  
Shall lash all Europe into blood;  
Till you should turn to dearer matters,  
Dear to the man that is dear to God;

How best to help the slender store,  
How mend the dwellings, of the poor;

How gain in life, as life advances,  
Valour and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come: the lawn as yet  
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet;  
But when the wreath of March has  
blossom'd,  
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,  
For those are few we hold as dear;  
Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
Many and many a happy year.

*January, 1854.*

## WILL

### I

O WELL for him whose will is strong!  
He suffers, but he will not suffer long;  
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong:  
For him nor moves the loud world's ran-  
dom mock,  
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,  
Who seems a promontory of rock,  
That, compass'd round with turbulent  
sound,  
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,  
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

### II

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,  
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended  
Will,  
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,  
Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
Recurring and suggesting still!  
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
And o'er a weary sultry land,  
Far beneath a blazing vault,  
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,  
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

## IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest  
white,  
Deepening thy voice with the deepening  
of the night,

## IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

All along the valley, where thy waters flow,  
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty  
years ago.

All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,  
The two and thirty years were a mist that  
rolls away;

For all along the valley, down thy rocky  
bed,

Thy living voice to me was as the voice of  
the dead,

And all along the valley, by rock and cave  
and tree,

The voice of the dead was a living voice  
to me.

## IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINSTON

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,

Within was weeping for thee:

Shadows of three dead men

Walk'd in the walks with me,

Shadows of three dead men and thou  
wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods:

The Master was far away:

Nightingales warbled and sang

Of a passion that lasts but a day;

Still in the house in his coffin the Prince  
of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known

In courtesy like to thee:

Two dead men have I loved

With a love that ever will be:

Three dead men have I loved and thou  
art last of the three.

## THE FLOWER

ONCE in a golden hour

I cast to earth a seed.

Up there came a flower,

The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went

Thro' my garden-bower,

And muttering discontent

Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall

It wore a crown of light,

But thieves from o'er the wall

Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide

By every town and tower,

Till all the people cried,

'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable:

He that runs may read.

Most can raise the flowers now,

For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,

And some are poor indeed;

And now again the people

Call it but a weed.

## REQUIESCAT

FAIR is her cottage in its place,

Where yon broad water sweetly slowly  
glides.

It sees itself from thatch to base

Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to die!

Her quiet dream of life this hour may  
cease.

Her peaceful being slowly passes by

To some more perfect peace.

## THE SAILOR BOY

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,

Shot o'er the seething harbour-bar,

And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,

And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud

He heard a fierce mermaid cry,

'O boy, tho' thou art young and proud,

I see the place where thou wilt lie.

'The sands and yeasty surges mix

In caves about the dreary bay,

And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,

And in thy heart the scrawl shall play.'

## THE SAILOR BOY

'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure  
To those that stay and those that roam,  
But I will nevermore endure  
To sit with empty hands at home.

'My mother clings about my neck,  
My sisters crying, "Stay for shame;"  
My father raves of death and wreck,  
They are all to blame, they are all to blame.

'God help me! save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea,  
A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me.'

### THE ISLET

'WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we go,  
For a score of sweet little summers or so?'  
The sweet little wife of the singer said,  
On the day that follow'd the day she was wed,  
'Whither, O whither, love, shall we go?  
And the singer shaking his curly head  
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys  
There at his right with a sudden crash,  
Singing, 'And shall it be over the seas  
With a crew that is neither rude nor rash,  
But a bevy of Erores apple-cheek'd,  
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,  
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,  
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I know,  
A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;  
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,  
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,  
Fairly-delicate palaces shine  
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,  
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd  
With many a rivulet high against the Sun  
The facets of the glorious mountain flash  
Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

'Thither, O thither, love, let us go.'

'No, no, no!  
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,  
There is but one bird with a musical  
throat,  
And his compass is but of a single note,  
That it makes one weary to hear.'

'Mock me not! mock me not! love, let us go.'

'No, love, no.  
For the bud ever breaks into bloom on the tree,  
And a storm never wakes on the lonely sea,  
And a worm is there in the lonely wood,  
That pierces the liver and blackens the blood;  
And makes it a sorrow to be.'

## CHILD-SONGS

### I

#### THE CITY CHILD

DAINTY little maiden, whither would you wander?

Whither from this pretty home, the home where mother dwells?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty little maiden,

'All among the gardens, auriculas, anemones,  
Roses and lilies and Canterbury-bells.'

Dainty little maiden, whither would you wander?

Whither from this pretty house, this city-house of ours?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty little maiden,

'All among the meadows, the clover and the clematis,  
Daisies and kingcups and honeysuckle-flowers.'

### II

#### MINNIE AND WINNIE

MINNIE and Winnie

Slept in a shell.

Sleep, little ladies!

And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,

Silver without;

Sounds of the great sea

Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies!

Wake not soon!

Echo on echo

Dies to the moon.

## CHILD-SONGS

Two bright stars  
Peep'd into the shell.  
'What are they dreaming of?  
Who can tell?'

Started a green linnet  
Out of the croft;  
Wake, little ladies,  
The sun is aloft! 🐦

### THE SPITEFUL LETTER

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,  
And with it a spiteful letter.  
My name in song has done him much  
wrong,  
For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,  
If men neglect your pages?  
I think not much of yours or of mine.  
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of the  
times!  
Are mine for the moment stronger?  
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot,  
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as brief;  
What room is left for a hater?  
Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener leaf,  
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I—is that your cry?  
And men will live to see it.  
Well—if it be so—so it is, you know;  
And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,  
But this is the time of hollies.  
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,  
How I hate the spites and the follies!

### LITERARY SQUABBLES

AH God! the petty fools of rhyme  
That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars  
Before the stony face of Time,  
And look'd at by the silent stars:

Who hate each other for a song,  
And do their little best to bite  
And pinch their brethren in the throng,  
And scratch the very dead for spite:

And strain to make an inch of room  
For their sweet selves, and cannot hear  
The sullen Lethe rolling doom  
On them and theirs and all things here:

When one small touch of Charity  
Could lift them nearer God-like state  
Than if the crowded Orb should cry  
Like those who cried Diana great:

And I too, talk, and lose the touch  
I talk of. Surely, after all,  
The noblest answer unto such  
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

### THE VICTIM

#### I

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,  
A famine after laid them low,  
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,  
For on them brake the sudden foe;  
So thick they died the people cried,  
'The Gods are moved against the land.'  
The Priest in horror about his altar  
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:  
'Help us from famine  
And plague and strife!  
What would you have of us?  
Human life?  
Were it our nearest,  
Were it our dearest,  
(Answer, O answer)  
We give you his life.'

#### II

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,  
And cattle died, and deer in wood,  
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd  
And whiten'd all the rolling flood;  
And dead men lay all over the way,  
Or down in a furrow scathed with flame:  
And ever and aye the Priesthood moan'd,  
Till at last it seem'd that an answer came.  
'The King is happy  
In child and wife;  
Take you his dearest,  
Give us a life.'

## THE VICTIM

### III

The Priest went out by heath and hill;  
The King was hunting in the wild;  
They found the mother sitting still;  
She cast her arms about the child.  
The child was only eight summers old,  
His beauty still with his years increased,  
His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,  
He seem'd a victim due to the priest.  
The Priest beheld him,  
And cried with joy,  
'The Gods have answer'd:  
We give them the boy.'

### IV

The King return'd from out the wild,  
He bore but little game in hand;  
The mother said, 'They have taken the  
child  
To spill his blood and heal the land:  
The land is sick, the people diseased,  
And blight and famine on all the lea:  
The holy Gods, they must be appeased,  
So I pray you tell the truth to me.  
They have taken our son,  
They will have his life.  
Is *he* your dearest?  
Or I, the wife?'

### V

The King bent low, with hand on brow,  
He stay'd his arms upon his knee:  
'O wife, what use to answer now?  
For now the Priest has judged for me.'  
The King was shaken with holy fear;  
'The Gods,' he said, 'would have chosen  
well;  
Yet both are near, and both are dear,  
And which the dearest I cannot tell!  
But the Priest was happy,  
His victim won:  
'We have his dearest,  
His only son!'

### VI

The rites prepared, the victim bared,  
The knife uprising toward the blow  
To the altar-stone she sprang alone,  
'Me, not my darling, no!'  
He caught her away with a sudden cry;  
Suddenly from him brake his wife,  
And shrieking 'I am his dearest, I—  
I am his dearest!' rush'd on the knife.  
And the Priest was happy,  
'O, Father Odin,  
We give you a life.  
Which was his nearest?  
Who was his dearest?  
The Gods have answer'd;  
We give them the wife!'

## WAGES

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,  
Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—  
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—  
Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she:  
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be dust,  
Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?  
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,  
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:  
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

## THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—  
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?  
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

## THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,  
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;  
For is He not all but that which has power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom  
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—  
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,  
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;  
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;  
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

## THE VOICE AND THE PEAK

### I

THE voice and the Peak  
Far over summit and lawn,  
The lone glow and long roar  
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of dawn!

### II

All night have I heard the voice  
Rave over the rocky bar,  
But thou wert silent in heaven,  
Above thee glided the star.

### III

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,  
That standest high above all?  
'I am the voice of the Peak,  
I roar and rave for I fall.

### IV

'A thousand voices go  
To North, South, East, and West;  
They leave the heights and are troubled,  
And moan and sink to their rest.

### V

'The fields are fair beside them,  
The chestnut towers in his bloom;  
But they—they feel the desire of the deep—  
Fall, and follow their doom.

### VI

'The deep has power on the height,  
And the height has power on the deep;  
They are raised for ever and ever,  
And sink again into sleep.'

### VII

Not raised for ever and ever,  
But when their cycle is o'er,  
The valley, the voice, the peak, the star  
Pass, and are found no more.

### VIII

The Peak is high and flush'd  
At his highest with sunrise fire;  
The Peak is high, and the stars are high,  
And the thought of a man is higher.

### IX

A deep below the deep,  
And a height beyond the height!  
Our hearing is not hearing,  
And our seeing is not sight.

### X

The voice and the Peak  
Far into heaven withdrawn,  
The lone glow and long roar  
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of dawn!

## 'FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL'

FLOWER in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower—but *if* I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.

### A DEDICATION

DEAR, near and true—no truer Time him-  
self  
Can prove you, tho' he make you ever-  
more  
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life  
Shoots to the fall—take this and pray  
that he

Who wrote it, honouring your sweet faith  
in him,  
May trust himself; and after praise and  
scorn,  
As one who feels the immeasurable  
world,  
Attain the wise indifference of the wise;  
And after Autumn past—if left to pass  
His autumn into seeming-leafless days—  
Draw toward the long frost and longest  
night,  
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the fruit  
Which in our winter woodland looks a  
flower.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*).

## EXPERIMENTS

### BOADICEA

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries  
Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,  
Far in the East Boadicea, standing loftily charioted,  
Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,  
Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Càmulodúne,  
Yell'd and skriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

'They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populaces,  
Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me supplicating?  
Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall I brook to be supplicated?  
Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak and talon annihilate us?  
Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering?  
Bark an answer, Britain's raven! bark and blacken innumerable,  
Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcase a skeleton,  
Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from the wilderness, wallow in it,  
Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be propitiated.  
Lo their colony half-defended! lo their colony, Càmulodúne!  
There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary.  
There the hive of Roman liars worship an emperor-idiot.  
Such is Rome, and this her deity: hear it, Spirit of Cássivelaúin!

'Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian!  
Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catieuchlanian, Trinobant.  
These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,  
Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard ærially,  
Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred.  
Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.  
Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men;

## BOADICEA

Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the refluent estuary;  
Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily tottering—  
There was one who watch'd and told me—down their statue of Victory fell.  
Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the colony C  mulod  ne,  
Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall we care to be pitiful?  
Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall we dandle it amorously?

'Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,  
There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony,  
Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible prophetesses,  
"Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets!  
Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,  
Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty one yet!  
Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,  
Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,  
Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming Paradises,  
Thine the North and thine the South and thine the battle-thunder of God,"  
So they chanted: how shall Britain light upon auguries happier?  
So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now.

'Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
Me the wife of rich Pras  tagus, me the lover of liberty,  
Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and humiliated,  
Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators!  
See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy!  
Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated.  
Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony C  mulod  ne!  
There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing territory,  
Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringed Britoness—  
Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inexorable.  
Shout Icenian, Catiuchlanian, shout Coritanian, Trinobant,  
Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously  
Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd.  
Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of C  nobeline!  
There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,  
Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.  
There they dwelt and there they rioted; there—there—they dwell no more.  
Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the statuary,  
Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,  
Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,  
Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,  
Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little one out,  
Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers, trample them under us.'

So the Queen Boadice  , standing loftily charioted,  
Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,  
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her fierce volubility.  
Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,  
Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lineaments,  
Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January,



## BOADICEA

Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the precipices,  
Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory.  
So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries  
Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous hand,  
Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avarice,  
Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,  
Then her pulses at the clamouring of her enemy fainted away.  
Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds.  
Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous agonies.  
Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous legionary,  
Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam, C  mulod  ne.

## IN QUANTITY

### ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

#### *Hexameters and Pentameters*

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer!  
No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.  
When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England?  
When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?  
Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,  
Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

#### MILTON

##### *Alcaics*

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,  
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,  
God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
Milton, a name to resound for ages;  
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,  
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean  
Rings to the roar of an angel onset—  
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,  
And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
Where some refulgent sunset of India  
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
And crimson-hued the stately palm-  
woods  
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

##### *Hendecasyllabics*

O YOU chorus of indolent reviewers,  
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
All composed in a metre of Catullus,  
All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,

Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.  
Should I flounder awhile without a tumble  
Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
They should speak to me not without a  
welcome,  
All that chorus of indolent reviewers.  
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,  
So fantastical is the dainty metre.  
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor be-  
lieve me  
Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.  
O blatant Magazines, regard me rather—  
Since I blush to belaud myself a moment—  
As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost  
Horticultural art, or half coquette-like  
Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

#### SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE

So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd  
applause;  
Then loosed their sweating horses from  
the yoke,  
And each beside his chariot bound his own;  
And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep

## SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD

<p>In haste they drove, and honey-hearted              wine          And bread from out the houses brought,              and heap'd          Their firewood, and the winds from off the              plain          Roll'd the rich vapour far into the heaven.          And these all night upon the bridge<sup>1</sup> of              war          Sat glorying; many a fire before them              blazed:          As when in heaven the stars about the              moon          Look beautiful, when all the winds are              laid,</p>	<p>And every height comes out, and jutting              peak          And valley, and the immeasurable heavens          Break open to their highest, and all the              stars          Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his              heart:          So many a fire between the ships and              stream          Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of              Troy,          A thousand on the plain; and close by each          Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;          And eating hoary grain and pulse the              steeds,          Fixt by their cars, waited the golden dawn.</p>
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<sup>1</sup> Or, ridge.

*Iliad* VIII. 542-561.

## THE WINDOW

### OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS

FOUR years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as 'Orpheus with his lute,' and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

*December, 1870.*

A. TENNYSON.

### THE WINDOW

<p style="text-align: center;">ON THE HILL</p> <p>THE lights and shadows fly!          Yonder it brightens and darkens down on              the plain.          A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's eye!          Oh is it the brook, or a pool, or her window              pane,          When the winds are up in the morn-              ing?</p> <p>Clouds that are racing above,          And winds and lights and shadows that              cannot be still,          All running on one way to the home of              my love,          You are all running on, and I stand on the              slope of the hill,          And the winds are up in the morning!</p> <p>Follow, follow the chase!          And my thoughts are as quick and as quick,              ever on, on, on.</p>	<p>O lights, are you flying over her sweet              little face?          And my heart is there before you are come,              and gone,          When the winds are up in the              morning!</p> <p>Follow them down the slope!          And I follow them down to the window-              pane of my dear,          And it brightens and darkens and              brightens like my hope,          And it darkens and brightens and darkens              like my fear,          And the winds are up in the morning.</p>
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### AT THE WINDOW

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
 Clasp her window, trail and twine!  
 Rose, rose and clematis,  
 Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,

## THE WINDOW

Kiss, kiss; and make her a bower  
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,  
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine?  
Rose, rose and clematis,  
Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,  
Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower  
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,  
Dropt, a flower.

### GONE

Gone!  
Gone, till the end of the year,  
Gone, and the light gone with her, and  
left me in shadow here!  
Gone—flitted away,  
Taken the stars from the night and the sun  
from the day!  
Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a storm  
in the air!  
Flown to the east or the west, flitted I  
know not where!  
Down in the south is a flash and a groan:  
she is there! she is there!

### WINTER

The frost is here,  
And fuel is dear,  
And woods are sear,  
And fires burn clear,  
And frost is here  
And has bitten the heel of the going year.

Bite, frost, bite!  
You roll up away from the light  
The blue wood-louse, and the plump  
dormouse,  
And the bees are still'd, and the flies are  
kill'd,  
And you bite far into the heart of the  
house,  
But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite!  
The woods are all the searer,  
The fuel is all the dearer,  
The fires are all the clearer,  
My spring is all the nearer,  
You have bitten into the heart of the earth,  
But not into mine.

### SPRING

Birds' love and birds' song  
Flying here and there,  
Birds' song and birds' love,  
And you with gold for hair!  
Birds' song and birds' love,  
Passing with the weather,  
Men's song and men's love,  
To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love,  
And women's love and men's!  
And you my wren with a crown of gold,  
You my queen of the wrens!  
You the queen of the wrens—  
We'll be birds of a feather,  
I'll be King of the Queen of the wrens,  
And all in a nest together.

### THE LETTER

Where is another sweet as my sweet,  
Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy?  
Fine little hands, fine little feet—  
Dewy blue eye.  
Shall I write to her? shall I go?  
Ask her to marry me by and by?  
Somebody said that she'd say no;  
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?  
Ay or no, from shy of the shy?  
Go, little letter, apace, apace,  
Fly;  
Fly to the light in the valley below—  
Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye:  
Somebody said that she'd say no;  
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

### NO ANSWER

The mist and the rain, the mist and the  
rain!  
Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?  
And never a glimpse of her window pane!  
And I may die but the grass will grow,  
And the grass will grow when I am gone,  
And the wet west wind and the world will  
go on.  
Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,  
No is trouble and cloud and storm,  
Ay is life for a hundred years,

## THE WINDOW

No will push me down to the worm,  
And when I am there and dead and gone,  
The wet west wind and the world will  
go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and the  
wet!

Wet west wind how you blow, you blow!  
And never a line from my lady yet!  
Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?  
Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,  
The wet west wind and the world may  
go on.

### NO ANSWER

Winds are loud and you are dumb,  
Take my love, for love will come,  
Love will come but once a life.  
Winds are loud and winds will pass!  
Spring is here with leaf and grass:  
Take my love and be my wife.  
After-loves of maids and men  
Are but dainties drest again:  
Love me now, you'll love me then:  
Love can love but once a life.

### THE ANSWER

Two little hands that meet,  
Claspt on her seal, my sweet!  
Must I take you and break you,  
Two little hands that meet?  
I must take you, and break you,  
And loving hands must part—  
Take, take—break, break—  
Break—you may break my heart.  
Faint heart never won—  
Break, break, and all's done.

### AY

Be merry, all birds, to-day,  
Be merry on earth as you never were  
merry before,  
Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far away,  
And merry for ever and ever, and one  
day more.

### Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.  
Look, look, how he flits,  
The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,  
from out of the pine!

Look how they tumble the blossom, the  
mad little tits!  
'Cuck-oo! Cuck-oo!' was ever a May so  
fine?

### Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.  
O merry the linnet and dove,  
And swallow and sparrow and thristle,  
and have your desire!  
O merry my heart, you have gotten the  
wings of love,  
And flit like the king of the wrens with  
a crown of fire.  
Why?  
For it's ay ay, ay ay.

### WHEN

Sun comes, moon comes,  
Time slips away.  
Sun sets, moon sets,  
Love, fix a day.  
'A year hence, a year hence.'  
'We shall both be gray.'  
'A month hence, a month hence.'  
'Far, far away.'  
'A week hence, a week hence.'  
'Ah, the long delay.'  
'Wait a little, wait a little,  
You shall fix a day.'  
'To-morrow, love, to-morrow,  
And that's an age away.'  
Blaze upon her window, sun,  
And honour all the day.

### MARRIAGE MORNING

Light, so low upon earth,  
You send a flash to the sun.  
Here is the golden close of love,  
All my wooing is done.  
Oh, the woods and the meadows,  
Woods where we hid from the wet,  
Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,  
Meadows in which we met!  
Light, so low in the vale  
You flash and lighten afar,  
For this is the golden morning of love,  
And you are his morning star.

## THE WINDOW

Flash, I am coming, I come,  
By meadow and stile and wood,  
Oh, lighten into my eyes and my heart,  
Into my heart and my blood!

Heart, are you great enough  
For a love that never tires?

O heart, are you great enough for  
love?

I have heard of thorns and briers.  
Over the thorns and briers,  
Over the meadows and stiles,  
Over the world to the end of it  
Flash for a million miles.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;  
Thou madest Life in man and brute;  
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:  
Thou madest man, he knows not why,  
He thinks he was not made to die;  
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:  
Our wills are ours, we know not how;  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day and cease to be:  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;  
For knowledge is of things we see;  
And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;  
We mock thee when we do not fear:  
But help thy foolish ones to bear;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;  
What seem'd my worth since I began;  
For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
Confusions of a wasted youth;  
Forgive them where thy fail in truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

### I

I HEED it truth, with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
And find in loss a gain to match?  
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:  
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
The long result of love, and boast,  
'Behold the man that loved and lost,  
But all he was is overworn.'

### II

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones  
That name the under-lying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
And bring the firstling to the flock;  
And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale,  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to fail from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into thee.

### III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;  
A web is wov'n across the sky;  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun:

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands—  
With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own,—  
A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind?

### IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;  
My will is bondsman to the dark;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou should'st fail from thy desire,  
Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early years.  
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,  
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd eyes;  
With morning wakes the will, and cries,  
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

### V

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel;  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the cold:  
But that large grief which these unfold  
Is given in outline and no more.

### VI

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,'  
That 'Loss is common to the race'—  
And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more:  
Too common! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;  
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,  
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
At that last hour to please him well;  
Who mused on all I had to tell,  
And something written, something  
thought;

Expecting still his advent home;  
And ever met him on his way  
With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'  
Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,  
That sittest ranging golden hair;  
And glad to find thyself so fair,  
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest;  
And thinking 'this will please him best,'  
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;  
And with the thought her colour burns;  
And, having left the glass, she turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future Lord  
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?  
And what to me remains of good?  
To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me no second friend.

### VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

### VIII

A happy lover who has come  
To look on her that loves him well,  
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,  
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light  
Dies off at once from bower and hall,  
And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot  
In which we two were wont to meet,  
The field, the chamber and the street,  
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
In those deserted walks, may find  
A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
O my forsaken heart, with thee  
And this poor flower of poesy  
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
I go to plant it on his tomb,  
That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or dying, there at least may die.

### IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
Sailst the placid ocean-plains  
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
In vain; a favourable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me.

### X

I hear the noise about thy keel;  
I hear the bell struck in the night:  
I see the cabin-window bright;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

# IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign lands;  
And letters unto trembling hands;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home-bred fancies: O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;  
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall;  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

## XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;  
I leave this mortal ark behind,  
A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern skies,  
And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying; 'Comes he thus, my friend?  
Is this the end of all my care?'  
And circle moaning in the air:  
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn  
That I have been an hour away.

## XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees  
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels  
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
A void where heart on heart reposed;  
And, where warm hands have prest and  
closed,  
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
An awful thought, a life removed,  
The human-hearted man I loved,  
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,  
I do not suffer in a dream;  
For now so strange do these things seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
And glance about the approaching sails,  
As tho' they brought but merchants'  
bales,  
And not the burthen that they bring.

## XIV

If one should bring me this report,  
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,  
And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port;



# IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
Should see thy passengers in rank  
Come stepping lightly down the plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine;  
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
And how my life had droop'd of late,  
And he should sorrow o'er my state  
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
No hint of death in all his frame,  
But found him all in all the same,  
I should not feel it to be strange.

## XV

To-night the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day:  
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver  
That all thy motions gently pass  
Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;  
And but for fear it is not so,  
The wild unrest that lives in woe  
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
And onward drags a labouring breast,  
And topples round the dreary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## XVI

What words are these have fall'n from me?  
Can calm despair and wild unrest  
Be tenants of a single breast,  
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take  
The touch of change in calm or storm;  
But knows no more of transient form  
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?  
Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
And staggers blindly ere she sink?  
And stunn'd me from my power to think  
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man  
Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
And flashes into false and true,  
And mingles all without a plan?

## XVII

Thou comest, much wept for: such a  
breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week: the days go by:  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark;  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

## XVIII

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

### XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no more;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls;  
My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

### XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,  
That breathe a thousand tender vows,  
Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
And weep the fulness from the mind:  
'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find  
Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort win;  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
And scarce endure to draw the breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and think,  
'How good! how kind! and he is gone.'

### XXI

I sing to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he speak:  
'This fellow would make weakness weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain,  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When Science reaches forth her arms  
To feel from world to world, and charms  
Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:  
Ye never knew the sacred dust:  
I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,  
For now her little ones have ranged;  
And one is sad; her note is changed,  
Because her brood is stol'n away.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

### XXII

The path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,  
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to snow:

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
And, crown'd with all the season lent,  
From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began  
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
And spread his mantle dark and cold,  
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
And think, that somewhere in the waste  
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

### XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
Or breaking into song by fits,  
Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
I wander, often falling lame,  
And looking back to whence I came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it  
ran  
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb;  
But all the lavish hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to each,  
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
And Thought leapt out to wed with  
Thought  
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,  
And all was good that Time could bring,  
And all the secret of the Spring  
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy  
On Argive heights divinely sang,  
And round us all the thicket rang  
To many a flute of Arcady.

### XXIV

And was the day of my delight  
As pure and perfect as I say?  
The very source and fount of Day  
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
This earth had been the Paradise  
It never look'd to human eyes  
Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief  
Makes former gladness loom so great?  
The lowness of the present state,  
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win  
A glory from its being far;  
And orb into the perfect star  
We saw not, when we moved therein?

### XXV

I know that this was Life,—the track  
Whereon with equal feet we fared;  
And then, as now, the day prepared  
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
As light as carrier-birds in air;  
I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
When mighty Love would cleave in  
twain  
The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him.

### XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way;  
I with it; for I long to prove  
No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
And goodness, and hath power to see  
Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee  
Or see (in Him is no before)  
In more of life true life no more  
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

### XXVII

I envy not in any moods  
The captive void of noble rage,  
The linnet born within the cage,  
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes  
His license in the field of time,  
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted troth  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;  
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

### XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ:  
The moon is hid; the night is still;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry merry bells of Yule.

### XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight  
In dance and song and games and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use and  
Wont,  
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new;  
Why should they miss their yearly due  
Before their time? They too will die.

### XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth;  
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gambol'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:  
We heard them sweep the winter land;  
And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;  
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him  
Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept  
Upon us: surely rest is meet:  
'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,'  
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Our voices took a higher range;  
Once more we sang: 'They do not die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
With gather'd power, yet the same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
Draw forth the cheerful day from night:  
O Father, touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was born.

### XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
And home to Mary's house return'd,  
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four  
days?'  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;  
He told it not; or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

### XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so complete,  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet  
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful  
prayers,  
Whose loves in higher love endure;  
What souls possess themselves so pure,  
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

### XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm  
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,  
Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
Her early Heaven, her happy views;  
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good:  
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And ev'n for want of such a type.

### XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks  
In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?  
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose  
Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

### XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust  
Should murmur from the narrow house,  
'The cheeks drop in; the body bows;  
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust.'

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,  
But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
To keep so sweet a thing alive.'  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift or slow  
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
'The sound of that forgetful shore  
Will change my sweetness more and  
more,  
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put  
An idle case? If Death were seen  
At first as Death, Love had not been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the  
grape,  
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

### XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
Where truth in closest words shall fail,  
When truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
With human hands the creed of creeds  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
In roarings round the coral reef.

### XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:  
'Thou pratest here where thou art least;  
This faith has many a purer priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,  
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek:  
'I am not worthy ev'n to speak  
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,  
And all he said of things divine,  
(And dear to me as sacred wine  
To dying lips is all he said),

'I murmur'd, as I came along,  
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd;  
And loiter'd in the master's field,  
And darken'd sanctities with song.'

### XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,  
Tho' always under alter'd skies  
The purple from the distance dies,  
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
The herald melodies of spring,  
But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
Survive in spirits render'd free,  
Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

### XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,  
And answering now my random stroke  
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,  
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,  
To thee too comes the golden hour  
When flower is feeling after flower;  
But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,

## IN-MEMORIAM A. H. H.

And darkening the dark graves of men,—  
 What whisper'd from her lying lips?  
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,  
 And passes into gloom again.

### XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour  
 And look on Spirits breathed away,  
 As on a maiden in the day  
 When first she wears her orange-flower!  
 When crown'd with blessing she doth rise  
 To take her latest leave of home,  
 And hopes and light regrets that come  
 Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
 And tears are on the mother's face,  
 As parting with a long embrace  
 She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
 Becoming as is meet and fit  
 A link among the days, to knit  
 The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
 A life that bears immortal fruit  
 In those great offices that suit  
 The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!  
 How often shall her old fireside  
 Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
 How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
 And bring her babe, and make her boast,  
 Till even those that miss'd her most  
 Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
 Till growing winters lay me low;  
 My paths are in the fields I know,  
 And thine in undiscover'd lands.

### XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
 Did ever rise from high to higher;  
 As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
 As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
 And I have lost the links that bound  
 Thy changes; here upon the ground,  
 No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—  
 That I could wing my will with might  
 To leap the grades of life and light,  
 And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
 To that vague fear implied in death;  
 Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
 The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
 An inner trouble I behold,  
 A spectral doubt which makes me cold,  
 That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind  
 The wonders that have come to thee,  
 Thro' all the secular to-be,  
 But evermore a life behind.

### XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim:  
 He still outstript me in the race;  
 It was but unity of place  
 That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
 And he the much-beloved again,  
 A lord of large experience, train  
 To riper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those  
 That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
 When one that loves but knows not,  
 reaps

A truth from one that loves and knows?

### XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
 And every spirit's folded bloom  
 Thro' all its intervital gloom  
 In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
 Bare of the body, might it last,  
 And silent traces of the past  
 Be all the colour of the flower:

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

So then were nothing lost to man;  
 So that still garden of the souls  
 In many a figured leaf enrolls  
 The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole  
 As when he loved me here in Time,  
 And at the spiritual prime  
 Rewaken with the dawning soul.

### XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead?  
 For here the man is more and more;  
 But he forgets the days before  
 God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
 And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
 Gives out at times (he knows not whence)  
 A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years  
 (If Death so taste Lethæan springs),  
 May some dim touch of earthly things  
 Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
 O turn thee round, resolve the doubt;  
 My guardian angel will speak out  
 In that high place, and tell thee all.

### XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,  
 What time his tender palm is prest  
 Against the circle of the breast,  
 Has never thought that 'this is I.'

But as he grows he gathers much,  
 And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'  
 And finds 'I am not what I see,  
 And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind  
 From whence clear memory may begin,  
 As thro' the frame that binds him in  
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
 Which else were fruitless of their due,  
 Had man to learn himself anew  
 Beyond the second birth of Death.

### XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,  
 The path we came by, thorn and flower,  
 Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last  
 In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
 But clear from marge to marge shall  
 bloom  
 The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;  
 The fruitful hours of still increase;  
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
 A bounded field, nor stretching far;  
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

### XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,  
 Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
 The skirts of self again, should fall  
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:  
 Eternal form shall still divide  
 The eternal soul from all beside;  
 And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
 Enjoying each the other's good:  
 What vaster dream can hit the mood  
 Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
 Before the spirits fade away,  
 Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
 'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

### XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
 Were taken to be such as closed  
 Grave doubts and answers here pro-  
 posed,  
 Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;  
 She takes, when harsher moods remit,  
 What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
 And makes it vassal unto love:



## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,  
But better serves a wholesome law,  
And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
But rather loosens from the lip  
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

### XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,  
Let random influences glance,  
Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,  
The slightest air of song shall breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that make  
The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,  
Whose muffled motions blindly drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

### L

Be near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the nerves  
prick  
And tingle; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;  
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

### LI

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side?  
Is there no baseness we would hide?  
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:  
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?  
There must be wisdom with great Death:  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

### LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved;  
My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'  
The Spirit of true love replied;  
'Thou canst not move me from thy side,  
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears?  
What record? not the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

'So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.  
Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.'

### LIII

How many a father have I seen,  
A sober man, among his boys,  
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,  
Who wears his manhood hale and green:

And dare we to this fancy give,  
That had the wild oat not been sown,  
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown  
The grain by which a man may live?

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Or, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth,  
Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark, and be  
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

### LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?  
An infant crying in the night:  
An infant crying for the light:  
And with no language but a cry.

### LV

The wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere  
Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
And finding that of fifty seeds,  
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares  
Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

### LVI

'So careful of the type'? but no.  
From scarped cliff and quarried stone  
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:  
I bring to life, I bring to death:  
The spirit does but mean the breath:  
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law—  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

### LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song:  
Peace; come away: we do him wrong  
To sing so wildly: let us go.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;  
But half my life I leave behind:  
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;  
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead;  
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,  
'Adieu, adieu' for evermore.

### LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell:  
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
Of hearts that beat from day to day,  
Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
And those cold crypts where they shall  
cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore  
grieve  
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?  
Abide a little longer here,  
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

### LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me  
No casual mistress, but a wife,  
My bosom-friend and half of life;  
As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
And put thy harsher moods aside,  
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move.  
Nor will it lessen from to-day;  
But I'll have leave at times to play  
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
With so much hope for years to come,  
That, howsoever I know thee, some  
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

### LX

He past; a soul of nobler tone:  
My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
Like some poor girl whose heart is set  
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
She finds the baseness of her lot,  
Half jealous of she knows not what,  
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;  
She sighs amid her narrow days,  
Moving about the household ways,  
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,  
And tease her till the day draws by:  
At night she weeps, 'How vain am I!  
How should he love a thing so low?'

### LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,  
Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
With all the circle of the wise,  
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
How dimly character'd and slight,  
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,  
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
Where thy first form was made a man;  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

### LXII

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast  
Could make thee somewhat blench or  
fail,  
Then be my love an idle tale,  
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
When he was little more than boy,  
On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while  
His other passion wholly dies,  
Or in the light of deeper eyes  
Is matter for a flying smile.

# IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

## LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
And love in which my hound has part,  
Can hang no weight upon my heart  
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,  
As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy,  
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labour of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands;  
'Does my old friend remember me?'

## LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With 'Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee  
And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand:

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;  
His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;  
From off my bed the moonlight dies;  
And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the dark church like a ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

### LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my  
breath;  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not  
Death,  
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
When all our path was fresh with dew,  
And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,  
I find a trouble in thine eye,  
Which makes me sad I know not why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
I wake, and I discern the truth;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

### LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was lost:  
The streets were black with smoke and  
frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny boughs:  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary hairs:  
They call'd me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns:

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child:  
I found an angel of the night;  
The voice was low, the look was bright;  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled:

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
That seem'd to touch it into leaf:  
The voice was not the voice of grief,  
The words were hard to understand.

### LXX

I cannot see the features right,  
When on the gloom I strive to paint  
The face I know; the hues are faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
A hand that points, and palled shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning  
doors,

And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;  
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will  
I hear a wizard music roll,  
And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

### LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance  
And madness, thou hast forged at last  
A night-long Present of the Past  
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?  
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong  
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of change,  
The days that grow to something strange,  
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
The cataract flashing from the bridge,  
The breaker breaking on the beach.

### LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
And howlest, issuing out of night,  
With blasts that blow the poplar white,  
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
To pine in that reverse of doom,  
Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
With thy quick tears that make the rose  
Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame  
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd  
A chequer-work of beam and shade  
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;  
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,  
When the dark hand struck down thro'  
time,  
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows  
Thro' clouds that drench the morning  
star,  
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;  
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

### LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,  
So little done, such things to be,  
How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath:  
I curse not nature, no, nor death;  
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
And self-infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a name.

### LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
To those that watch it more and more,  
A likeness, hardly seen before,  
Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
I see thee what thou art, and know  
Thy likeness to the wise below,  
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
And what I see I leave unsaid,  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made  
His darkness beautiful with thee.

### LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd  
In verse that brings myself relief,  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;

What practice howsoever expert  
In fitting aptest words to things,  
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,  
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days  
To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
And round thee with the breeze of song  
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,  
The world which credits what is done  
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;  
But somewhere, out of human view,  
Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

### LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,  
And in a moment set thy face  
Where all the starry heavens of space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'  
The secular abyss to come,  
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
The darkness of our planet, last,  
Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Ere these have clothed their branchy  
bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;  
And what are they when these remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

### LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him, who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie  
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
May bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks;  
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that tells  
A grief, then changed to something else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways  
Shall ring with music all the same;  
To breathe my loss is more than fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

### LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth;  
The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
No wing of wind the region swept,  
But over all things brooding slept  
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
Again our ancient games had place,  
The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?  
No single tear, no mark of pain:  
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?  
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!  
No—mixt with all this mystic frame,  
Her deep relations are the same,  
But with long use her tears are dry.

### LXXIX

'More than my brothers are to me,'—  
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!  
I know thee of what force thou art  
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,  
As moulded like in Nature's mint;  
And hill and wood and field did print  
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
Thro' all his eddying coves; the same  
All winds that roam the twilight came  
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
But he was rich where I was poor,  
And he supplied my want the more  
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

### LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,  
That holy Death ere Arthur died  
Had moved me kindly from his side,  
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
A grief as deep as life or thought,  
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;  
I hear the sentence that he speaks;  
He bears the burthen of the weeks  
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;  
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,  
Unused example from the grave  
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

### LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here,  
'My love shall now no further range;  
There cannot come a mellow change,  
For now is love mature in ear.'

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Love, then, had hope of richer store:  
 What end is here to my complaint?  
 This haunting whisper makes me faint,  
 'More years had made me love thee more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:  
 'My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
 It might have drawn from after-heat.'

### LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death  
 For changes wrought on form and face;  
 No lower life that earth's embrace  
 May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
 From state to state the spirit walks;  
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks,  
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
 The use of virtue out of earth:  
 I know transplanted human worth  
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
 The wrath that garners in my heart;  
 He put our lives so far apart  
 We cannot hear each other speak.

### LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
 O sweet new-year delaying long;  
 Thou doest expectant nature wrong;  
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
 Thy sweetness from its proper place?  
 Can trouble live with April days,  
 Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
 The little speedwell's darling blue,  
 Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
 Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
 That longs to burst a frozen bud  
 And flood a fresher throat with song.

### LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone  
 The life that had been thine below,  
 And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
 To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
 A central warmth diffusing bliss  
 In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,  
 On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;  
 For now the day was drawing on,  
 When thou should'st link thy life with  
 one  
 Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;  
 But that remorseless iron hour  
 Made cypress of her orange flower,  
 Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
 To clasp their cheeks, to call them mine.  
 I see their unborn faces shine  
 Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,  
 Thy partner in the flowery walk  
 Of letters, genial table-talk,  
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labour fills  
 The lips of men with honest praise,  
 And sun by sun the happy days  
 Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;  
 And all the train of bounteous hours  
 Conduct by paths of growing powers,  
 To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
 Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
 Leaving great legacies of thought,  
 Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,  
 As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
 And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait  
 To the other shore, involved in thee,



## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
And He that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining hand,  
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?  
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content.

LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and pall,  
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
Demanding, so to bring relief  
To this which is our common grief,  
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above  
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;  
And whether love for him have drain'd  
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
A faithful answer from the breast,  
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest  
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
Till on mine ear this message falls,  
That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
Whose life, whose thoughts were little  
worth,  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of  
him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
O sacred essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,  
How much of act at human hands  
The sense of human will demands  
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
With gifts of grace, that might express  
All-comprehensive tenderness,  
All-subtilising intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved  
To works of weakness, but I find  
An image comforting the mind,  
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
For other friends that once I met;  
Nor can it suit me to forget  
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime  
To mourn for any overmuch;  
I, the divided half of such  
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
Eternal, separate from fears:  
The all-assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
And Spring that swells the narrow  
brooks,

And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
My old affection of the tomb,  
And my prime passion in the grave:

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

My old affection of the tomb,  
A part of stillness, yearns to speak:  
'Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;  
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;  
But in dear words of human speech  
We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain  
The starry clearness of the free?  
How is it? Canst thou feel for me  
Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall;  
'Tis hard for thee to fathom this;  
I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;  
Or so methinks the dead would say;  
Or so shall grief with symbols play  
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
That these things pass, and I shall prove  
A meeting somewhere, love with love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
I could not, if I would, transfer  
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
The promise of the golden hours?  
First love, first friendship, equal powers,  
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
That beats within a lonely place,  
That yet remembers his embrace,  
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
Quite in the love of what is gone,  
But seeks to beat in time with one  
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
The primrose of the later year,  
As not unlike to that of Spring.

### LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
Thro' all the dewy-tassel'd wood,  
And shadowing down the horned flood  
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
The full new life that feeds thy breath  
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and  
Death,  
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
On leagues of odour streaming far,  
'To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

### LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls  
In which of old I wore the gown;  
I roved at random thro' the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes  
The storm their high-built organs make,  
And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,  
The measured pulse of racing oars  
Among the willows; paced the shores  
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
The same, but not the same; and last  
Up that long walk of limes I past  
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:  
I linger'd; all within was noise  
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band  
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
And labour, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land;

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
But send it slackly from the string;  
And one would pierce an outer ring,  
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,  
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear  
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear  
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace  
And music in the bounds of law,  
To those conclusions when we saw  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;  
And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo.

### LXXXVIII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,  
O tell me where the senses mix,  
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ  
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I—my harp would prelude woe—  
I cannot all command the strings;  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

### LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;  
And thou, with all thy breadth and  
height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;  
He mixt in all our simple sports;  
They pleased him, fresh from brawling  
courts  
And dusty purlicus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the heat:

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and  
flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
And break the livelong summer day  
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,  
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,  
He loved to rail against it still,  
For 'ground in yonder social mill  
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge' he said 'in form and gloss  
The picturesque of man and man.'  
We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;  
And last, returning from afar,  
Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
We heard behind the woodbine veil  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honied hours.

# IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

## XC

He tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
Where highest heaven, who first could  
fling  
This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
Were closed with wail, resume their life,  
They would but find in child and wife  
An iron welcome when they rise:

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
To pledge them with a kindly tear,  
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,  
Behold their brides in other hands;  
The hard heir strides about their lands,  
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
Not less the yet-loved sire would make  
Confusion worse than death, and shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:  
Whatever change the years have wrought,  
I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee.

## XC I

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush;  
Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;  
The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
That ripple round the lonely grange;

Come: not in watches of the night,  
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,  
Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
And like a finer light in light.

## XCII

If any vision should reveal  
Thy likeness, I might count it vain  
As but the canker of the brain;  
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
Together in the days behind,  
I might but say, I hear a wind  
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
A fact within the coming year;  
And tho' the months, revolving near,  
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
But spiritual presentiments,  
And such refraction of events  
As often rises ere they rise.

## XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say  
No spirit ever brake the band  
That stays him from the native land  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
With gods in unconjectured bliss,  
O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear  
The wish too strong for words to name;  
That in this blindness of the frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought  
would hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
The spirits from their golden day,  
Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
My spirit is at peace with all.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
 Imaginations calm and fair,  
 The memory like a cloudless air,  
 The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,  
 And doubt beside the portal waits,  
 They can but listen at the gates,  
 And hear the household jar within.

### XCIV

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
 For underfoot the herb was dry;  
 And genial warmth; and o'er the sky  
 The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
 Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd:  
 The brook alone far-off was heard,  
 And on the board the fluttering urn:

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
 And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes  
 And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
 From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at  
 ease,  
 The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
 Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
 Withdrew themselves from me and  
 night,  
 And in the house light after light  
 Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read  
 Of that glad year which once had been,  
 In those fall'n leaves which kept their  
 green,  
 The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke  
 The silent-speaking words, and strange  
 Was love's dumb cry defying change  
 To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
 On doubts that drive the coward back,  
 And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
 The dead man touch'd me from the past,  
 And all at once it seem'd at last  
 The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd  
 About empyreal heights of thought,  
 And came on that which is, and caught  
 The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
 The steps of Time—the shocks of  
 Chance—  
 The blows of Death. At length my  
 trance  
 Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame  
 In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
 Thro' memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
 The knolls once more where, couch'd at  
 ease,  
 The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
 Laid their dark arms about the field:

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
 A breeze began to tremble o'er  
 The large leaves of the sycamore,  
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering fresher overhead,  
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung  
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
 The lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;  
 And East and West, without a breath,  
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
 To broaden into boundless day.

### XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue  
 eyes  
 Are tender over drowning flies,  
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew  
 In many a subtle question versed,  
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
 But ever strove to make it true:

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,  
He would not make his judgement blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind  
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;  
And Power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

### XCVII

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;  
He finds on misty mountain-ground  
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;  
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—  
I look'd on these and thought of thee  
In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,  
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
Their meetings made December June,  
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;  
The days she never can forget  
Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
He reads the secret of the star,  
He seems so near and yet so far,  
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
A wither'd violet is her bliss:  
She knows not what his greatness is,  
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
Of early faith and plighted vows;  
She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
She darkly feels him great and wise,  
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
'I cannot understand: I love.'

### XCVIII

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,  
And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
When I was there with him; and go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
That City. All her splendour seems  
No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me:  
I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend  
Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings  
Her shadow on the blaze of kings:  
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
With statelier progress to and fro  
The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,  
He told me, lives in any crowd,  
When all is gay with lamps, and loud  
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

# IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Imperial halls, or open plain;  
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks  
The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

## XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
So loud with voices of the birds,  
So thick with lowings of the herds,  
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast  
By meadows breathing of the past,  
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
A song that slights the coming care,  
And Autumn laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
To myriads on the genial earth,  
Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,  
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
To-day they count as kindred souls;  
They know me not, but mourn with me.

## C

I climb the hill: from end to end  
Of all the landscape underneath,  
I find no place that does not breathe  
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
Or low morass and whispering reed,  
Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
That hears the latest linnets trill,  
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill  
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;  
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,  
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
And each reflects a kindlier day;  
And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

## CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,  
The tender blossom flutter down,  
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,  
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,  
And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
The brook shall babble down the plain,  
At noon or when the lesser wain  
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
And flood the haunts of hern and crane;  
Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild  
A fresh association blow,  
And year by year the landscape grow  
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the labourer tills  
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades;  
And year by year our memory fades  
From all the circle of the hills.

## CII

We leave the well-beloved place  
Where first we gazed upon the sky;  
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,  
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden-walks I move,  
Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung  
Long since its matin song, and heard  
The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassel-hung.'

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

'The other answers, 'Yea, but here  
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
With thy lost friend among the bowers,  
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,  
And each prefers his separate claim,  
Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set  
To leave the pleasant fields and farms;  
They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

### CIII

On that last night before we went  
From out the doors where I was bred,  
I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
And maidens with me: distant hills  
From hidden summits fed with rills  
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
They sang of what is wise and good  
And graceful. In the centre stood  
A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
The shape of him I loved, and love  
For ever: then flew in a dove  
And brought a summons from the sea:

And when they learnt that I must go  
They wept and wail'd, but led the way  
To where a little shallop lay  
At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,  
And shadowing bluff that made the  
banks,  
We glided winding under ranks  
Of iris, and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore  
And rol'd the floods in grander space,  
The maidens gather'd strength and  
grace  
And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart  
And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb;  
I felt the thews of Anakim,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,  
And one would chant the history  
Of that great race, which is to be,  
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
Began to foam, and we to draw  
From deep to deep, to where we saw  
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
But thrice as large as man he bent  
To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:  
'We served thee here,' they said, 'so  
long,  
And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win  
An answer from my lips, but he  
Replying, 'Enter likewise ye  
And go with us:' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
A music out of sheet and shroud,  
We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud  
That landlike slept along the deep.

### CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ;  
The moon is hid, the night is still;  
A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
That wakens at this hour of rest  
A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
In lands where not a memory strays,  
Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.



## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

### CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave  
 This laurel, let this holly stand:  
 We live within the stranger's land,  
 And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
 And silent under other snows:  
 There in due time the woodbine blows,  
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
 The genial hour with mask and mime;  
 For change of place, like growth of time,  
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
 By which our lives are chiefly proved,  
 A little spare the night I loved,  
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;  
 For who would keep an ancient form  
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;  
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;  
 No dance, no motion, save alone  
 What lightens in the lucid cast

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed;  
 Run out your measured arcs, and lead  
 The closing cycle rich in good.

### CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
 The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
 The year is dying in the night;  
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
 The year is going, let him go;  
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
 For those that here we see no more;  
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
 And ancient forms of party strife;  
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
 The faithless coldness of the times;  
 Ring out, ring out thy mournful rhymes,  
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
 The civic slander and the spite;  
 Ring in the love of truth and right,  
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
 Ring out the darkness of the land,  
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

### CVII

It is the day when he was born,  
 A bitter day that early sank  
 Behind a purple-frosty bank  
 Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies  
 The blast of North and East, and ice  
 Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
 Above the wood which grides and clangs  
 Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
 To darken on the rolling brine  
 That breaks the coast. But fetch the  
 wine,  
 Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
 To make a solid core of heat;  
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
 Of all things ev'n as he were by;

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
With books and music, surely we  
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

### CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,  
And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting  
hymns?  
And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies:  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

### CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry;  
The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of man;  
Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace  
In such a sort, the child would twine  
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,  
My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

### CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
The men of rathe and riper years:  
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,  
Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
The flippant put himself to school  
And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine;  
And loved them more, that they were  
thine,  
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
But mine the love that will not tire,  
And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will.

### CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down  
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
To him who grasps a golden ball,  
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons thro' the gilded pale:

For who can always act? but he,  
To whom a thousand memories call,  
Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd  
Each office of the social hour  
To noble manners, as the flower  
And native growth of noble mind;

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
Drew in the expression of an eye,  
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse  
The grand old name of gentleman,  
Defamed by every charlatan,  
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

### CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes  
On glorious insufficiencies,  
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
Of all my love, art reason why  
I seem to cast a careless eye  
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power  
Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
And hope could never hope too much,  
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
And tracts of calm from tempest made,  
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

### CXIII

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;  
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee  
Which not alone had guided me,  
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—  
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
Becoming, when the time has birth,  
A lever to uplift the earth  
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,  
With agonies, with energies,  
With overthrowings, and with cries,  
And undulations to and fro.

### CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail  
Against her beauty? May she mix  
With men and prosper! Who shall fix  
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:  
She sets her forward countenance  
And leaps into the future chance,  
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—  
She cannot fight the fear of death.  
What is she, cut from love and faith,  
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
All barriers in her onward race  
For power. Let her know her place;  
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain; and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,  
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
Who grewest not alone in power  
And knowledge, but by year and hour  
In reverence and in charity.

### CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
Now burgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And drown'd in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
The happy birds, that change their sky  
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast  
Spring wakens too; and my regret  
Becomes an April violet,  
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

### CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
And meets the year, and gives and takes  
The colours of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,  
The life re-orient out of dust,  
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine  
Upon me, while I muse alone;  
And that dear voice, I once have known,  
Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
For days of happy commune dead;  
Less yearning for the friendship fled,  
Than some strong bond which is to be.

### CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this  
To hold me from my proper place,  
A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss:

That out of distance might ensue  
Desire of nearness doubly sweet;  
And unto meeting when we meet,  
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
And every span of shade that steals,  
And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.

### CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
The giant labouring in his youth;  
Nor dream of human love and truth,  
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead  
Are breathers of an ampler day  
For ever nobler ends. They say  
The solid earth whercon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random forms,  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to  
clime,  
The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place,  
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;  
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and show  
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

### CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, not as one that weeps  
I come once more; the city sleeps;  
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see  
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn  
A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,  
And bright the friendship of thine eye;  
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
I take the pressure of thine hand.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

### CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:  
I think we are not wholly brain,  
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,  
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with  
Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:  
Let Science prove we are, and then  
What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
His action like the greater ape,  
But I was *born* to other things.

### CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun  
And ready, thou, to die with him,  
Thou watchest all things ever dim  
And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
The boat is drawn upon the shore;  
Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
By thee the world's great work is heard  
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;  
Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,  
And voices hail it from the brink;  
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
For what is one, the first, the last,  
Thou, like my present and my past,  
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

### CXXII

Oh, 'wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
While I rose up against my doom,  
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,  
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul,  
In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
Divide us not, be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flash of joy,  
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
And every dew-drop paints a bow,  
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose.

### CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O earth, what changest thou hast thou seen!  
There where the long street roars, hath  
been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true;  
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

### CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;  
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;  
He, They, One, All; within, without;  
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;  
Nor thro' the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice 'believe no more'  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

No, like a child in doubt and fear:  
But that blind clamour made me wise;  
Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again  
What is, and no man understands;  
And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

### CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,  
Some bitter notes my harp would give,  
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;  
She did but look through dimmer eyes;  
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth:

And if the song were full of care,  
He breathed the spirit of the song;  
And if the words were sweet and strong  
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail  
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

### CXXVI

Love is and was my Lord and King,  
And in his presence I attend  
To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
Who moves about from place to place,  
And whispers to the worlds of space,  
In the deep night, that all is well.

### CXXVII

And all is well, tho' faith and form  
Be sunder'd in the night of fear;  
Well roars the storm to those that hear  
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
And him, the lazar, in his rags:  
They tremble, the sustaining crags;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;  
The fortress crashes from on high,  
The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell;  
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well.

### CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade;  
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
If all your office had to do  
With old results that look like new;  
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,  
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
To cramp the student at his desk,  
To make old bareness picturesque  
And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend  
On you and yours. I see in part  
That all, as in some piece of art,  
Is toil coöperant to an end.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

### CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,  
So far, so near in woe and weal;  
O loved the most, when most I feel  
There is a lower and a higher;  
Known and unknown; human, divine;  
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;  
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,  
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;  
Strange friend, past, present, and to be;  
Loved deeper, darker understood;  
Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
And mingle all the world with thee.

### CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;  
I hear thee where the waters run;  
Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair.  
What art thou then? I cannot guess;  
But tho' I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less:  
My love involves the love before;  
My love is vaster passion now;  
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,  
I seem to love thee more and more.  
Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
I have thee still, and I rejoice;  
I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

### CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure  
When all that seems shall suffer shock,  
Rise in the spiritual rock,  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,  
That we may lift from out of dust  
A voice as unto him that hears,  
A cry above the conquer'd years  
To one that with us works, and trust,  
With faith that comes of self-control,  
The truths that never can be proved  
Until we close with all we loved,  
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,  
Demand not thou a marriage lay;  
In that it is thy marriage day  
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
Since first he told me that he loved  
A daughter of our house; nor proved  
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
Some thrice three years: they went and  
came,  
Remade the blood and changed the  
frame,  
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm  
In dying songs a dead regret,  
But like a statue solid-set,  
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
Than in the summers that are flown,  
For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
As echoes out of weaker times,  
As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
That must be made a wife ere noon?  
She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
And then on thee; they meet thy look  
And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,  
He too foretold the perfect rose.  
For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;  
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

But now set out: the noon is near,  
And I must give away the bride;  
She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,  
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
That shielded all her life from harm  
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;  
Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and again  
The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of twain  
Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
By village eyes as yet unborn;  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them—maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave.  
They leave the porch, they pass the  
grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
For them the light of life increased,  
Who stay to share the morning feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
To meet and greet a whiter sun;  
My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,  
As drinking health to bride and groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
And those white-favour'd horses wait;  
They rise, but linger; it is late;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
From little cloudlets on the grass,  
But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
And talk of others that are wed,  
And how she look'd, and what he said,  
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
The shade of passing thought, the wealth  
Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance;—till I retire:  
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,  
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
Till over down and over dale  
All night the shining vapour sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
And catch at every mountain head,  
And o'er the friths that branch and  
spread

Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;  
And breaking let the splendour fall  
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
And, star and system rolling past,  
A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race



## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge; under whose command  
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought and loved and did,  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod  
This planet, was a noble type  
Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

## MAUD; A MONODRAMA

### PART I

#### I

#### I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,  
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,  
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,  
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers 'Death.'

#### II

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,  
His who had given me life—O father! O God! was it well?—  
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into the ground:  
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

#### III

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had fail'd,  
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,  
And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,  
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

#### IV

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd  
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,  
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard  
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

#### V

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.  
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintained:  
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,  
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd.

#### VI

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,  
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

## MAUD

### VII

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,  
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?  
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind  
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

### VIII

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print  
Of the golden age—why not? I have neither hope nor trust;  
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,  
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are ashes and dust.

### IX

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,  
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine,  
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;  
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges the wine.

### X

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,  
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

### XI

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits  
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,  
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits  
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

### XII

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,  
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,  
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

### XIII

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,  
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,  
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,  
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home.—

### XIV

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?  
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die  
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood  
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

## MAUD

### XV

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there was *love* in the passionate shriek,  
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave—  
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak  
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

### XVI

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.  
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?  
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,  
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

### XVII

Workmen up at the Hall!—they are coming back from abroad;  
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire:  
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;  
I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair,

### XVIII

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,  
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,  
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,  
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all,—

### XIX

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.  
No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.  
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.  
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

### II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may find it at last!  
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savour nor salt,  
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,  
Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where is the fault?  
All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)  
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been  
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,  
Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,  
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,  
From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

### III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,  
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,  
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,  
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;

## MAUD

Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong  
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before  
Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,  
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long  
Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,  
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,  
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,  
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,  
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found  
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

### IV

#### I

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime  
In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be  
Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,  
When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,  
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,  
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land?

#### II

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small!  
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite;  
And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar;  
And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall;  
And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light;  
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star!

#### III

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?  
I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd:  
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor;  
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.  
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud;  
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

#### IV

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal;  
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like  
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way:  
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;  
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,  
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

#### V

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower;  
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game  
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?  
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour;  
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame;  
However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

## MAUD

### VI

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,  
For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,  
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.  
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,  
So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man:  
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

### VII

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,  
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;  
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.  
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;  
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more  
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

### VIII

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.  
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?  
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.  
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?  
Or an infant civilisation be ruled with rod or with knout?  
I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

### IX

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,  
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,  
Far-off from the clamour of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;  
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise  
Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,  
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

### X

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,  
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.  
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.  
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;  
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;  
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

### V

#### I

A voice by the cedar tree  
In the meadow under the Hall!  
She is singing an air that is known to me,  
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,

A martial song like a trumpet's call!  
Singing alone in the morning of life,  
In the happy morning of life and of May,  
Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
March with banner and bugle and fife  
To the death, for their native land.

## MAUD

### II

Maud with her exquisite face,  
And wild voice pealing up to the sunnysky,  
And feet like sunny gems on an English  
green,  
Maud in the light of her youth and her  
grace,  
Singing of Death, and of Honour that  
cannot die,  
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid  
and mean,  
And myself so languid and base.

### III

Silence, beautiful voice!  
Be still, for you only trouble the mind  
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
A glory I shall not find.  
Still! I will hear you no more,  
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a  
choice  
But to move to the meadow and fall before  
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,  
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,  
Not her, not her, but a voice.

### VI

#### I

Morning arises stormy and pale,  
No sun, but a wannish glare  
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,  
And the budded peaks of the wood are  
bow'd  
Caught and cuff'd by the gale:  
I had fancied it would be fair.

#### II

Whom but Maud should I meet  
Last night, when the sunset burn'd  
On the blossom'd gable-ends  
At the head of the village street,  
Whom but Maud should I meet?  
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so  
sweet,  
She made me divine amends  
For a courtesy not return'd.

#### III

And thus a delicate spark  
Of glowing and growing light

Thro' the livelong hours of the dark  
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,  
Ready to burst in a colour'd flame;  
Till at last when the morning came  
In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
But an ashen-gray delight.

### IV

What if with her sunny hair,  
And smile as sunny as cold,  
She meant to weave me a snare  
Of some coquettish deceit,  
Cleopatra-like as of old  
To entangle me when we met,  
To have her lion roll in a silken net  
And fawn at a victor's feet.

### V

Ah, what shall I be at fifty  
Should Nature keep me alive,  
If I find the world so bitter  
When I am but twenty-five?  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile were all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

### VI

What if tho' her eye seem'd full  
Of a kind intent to me,  
What if that dandy-despot, he,  
That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull  
Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,  
Who wants the finer politic sense  
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—  
What if he had told her yesternorn  
How prettily for his own sweet sake  
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
That so, when the rotten hustings shake  
In another month to his brazen lies,  
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

### VII

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,  
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and  
ward,

## MAUD

Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,  
For often a man's own angry pride  
Is cap and bells for a fool.

### VIII

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
For am I not, am I not, here alone  
So many a summer since she died,  
My mother, who was so gentle and good?  
Living alone in an empty house,  
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,  
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot  
mouse,

And my own sad name in corners cried,  
When the shiver of dancing leaves is  
thrown

About its echoing chambers wide,  
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown  
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,  
And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

### IX

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught  
By that you swore to withstand?  
For what was it else within me wrought  
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,  
That made my tongue so stammer and trip  
When I saw the treasured splendour, her  
hand,

Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

### X

I have play'd with her when a child;  
She remembers it now we meet.  
Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled  
By some coquettish deceit.  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

### VII

#### I

Did I hear it half in a doze  
Long since, I know not where?

Did I dream it an hour ago,  
When asleep in this arm-chair?

#### II

Men were drinking together,  
Drinking and talking of me;  
'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

#### III

Is it an echo of something  
Read with a boy's delight,  
Viziers nodding together  
In some Arabian night?

#### IV

Strange, that I hear two men,  
Somewhere, talking of me;  
'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy  
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

### VIII

She came to the village church,  
And sat by a pillar alone;  
An angel watching an urn  
Wept over her, carved in stone;  
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,  
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd  
To find they were met by my own;  
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat  
stronger  
And thicker, until I heard no longer  
The snowy-banded, dilettante,  
Delicate-handed priest intone;  
And thought, is it pride, and mused and  
sigh'd  
'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

### IX

I was walking a mile,  
More than a mile from the shore,  
The sun look'd out with a smile  
Betwixt the cloud and the moor  
And riding at set of day  
Over the dark moor land,  
Rapidly riding far away,  
She waved to me with her hand.  
There were two at her side,  
Something flash'd in the sun,  
Down by the hill I saw them ride,

## MAUD

In a moment they were gone:  
Like a sudden spark  
Struck vainly in the night,  
Then returns the dark  
With no more hope of light.

### X

#### I

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?  
Was not one of the two at her side  
This new-made lord, whose splendour  
plucks

The slavish hat from the villager's head?  
Whose old grandfather has lately died,  
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom  
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine  
Master of half a servile shire,  
And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
Rich in the grace all women desire,  
Strong in the power that all men adore,  
And simper and set their voices lower,  
And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
New as his title, built last year,  
There amid perky larches and pine,  
And over the sullen-purple moor  
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

### II

What, has he found my jewel out?  
For one of the two that rode at her side  
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:  
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride,  
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.  
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt  
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
A bought commission, a waxen face,  
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—  
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?  
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,  
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,  
At war with myself and a wretched race,  
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

### III

Last week came one to the county town,  
To preach our poor little army down,

And play the game of the despot kings,  
Tho' the state has done it and thrice as  
well:

This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,  
Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and  
rings

Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,  
This huckster put down war! can he tell  
Whether war be a cause or a consequence?  
Put down the passions that make earth  
Hell!

Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind  
The bitter springs of anger and fear;  
Down too, down at your own fireside,  
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
For each is at war with mankind.

### IV

I wish I could hear again  
The chivalrous battle-song  
That she warbled alone in her joy!  
I might persuade myself then  
She would not do herself this great wrong,  
To take a wanton dissolute boy  
For a man and leader of men.

### V

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,  
Like some of the simple great ones gone  
For ever and ever by,  
One still strong man in a blatant land,  
Whatever they call him, what care I,  
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one  
Who can rule and dare not lie.

### VI

And ah for a man to arise in me,  
That the man I am may cease to be!

### XI

#### I

O let the solid ground  
Not fail beneath my feet  
Before my life has found  
What some have found so sweet;  
Then let come what come may,  
What matter if I go mad,  
I shall have had my day.



## MAUD

### II

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
Not close and darken above me  
Before I am quite quite sure  
That there is one to love me;  
Then let come what come may  
To a life that has been so sad,  
I shall have had my day.

### XII

#### I

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling,  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling.

#### II

Where was Maud? in our wood;  
And I, who else, was with her.  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together.

#### III

Birds in our wood sang  
Ringing thro' the valleys,  
Maud is here, here, here  
In among the lilies.

#### IV

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately;  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.

#### V

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favour!  
O Maud were sure of Heaven  
If lowliness could save her.

#### VI

I know the way she went  
Home with her maiden posy,  
For her feet have touch'd the meadows  
And left the daisies rosy.

#### VII

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
Were crying and calling to her,  
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?  
One is come to woo her.

### VIII

Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charley snarling,  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling.

### XIII

#### I

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,  
Is that a matter to make me fret?  
That a calamity hard to be borne?  
Well, he may live to hate me yet.  
Fool that I am to be vexed with his pride!  
I past him, I was crossing his lands;  
He stood on the path a little aside;  
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and  
white,  
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;  
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,  
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

#### II

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,  
I long'd so heartily then and there  
To give him the grasp of fellowship;  
But while I past he was humming an air,  
Stopt, and then with a riding whip  
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
And curving a contumelious lip,  
Gorgonised me from head to foot  
With a stony British stare.

#### III

Why sits he here in his father's chair?  
That old man never comes to his place:  
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?  
For only once, in the village street,  
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,  
A gray old wolf and a lean.  
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;  
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
She might by a true descent be untrue;  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:  
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
To the sweeter blood by the other side;  
Her mother has been a thing complete,  
However she came to be so allied.  
And fair without, faithful within,

## MAUD

Maud to him is nothing akin:  
Some peculiar mystic grace  
Made her only the child of her mother,  
And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
All, all upon the brother.

### IV

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!  
Has not his sister smiled on me?

### XIV

#### I

Maud has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn;  
There she walks in her state  
And tends upon bed and bower,  
And thither I climb'd at dawn  
And stood by her garden-gate;  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

#### II

Maud's own little oak-room  
(Which Maud, like a precious stone  
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
Lights with herself, when alone  
She sits by her music and books  
And her brother lingers late  
With a roystering company) looks  
Upon Maud's own garden-gate:  
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white  
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
On the hasp of the window, and my Delight  
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost,  
to glide,  
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down  
to my side,  
There were but a step to be made.

#### III

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
And again seem'd overbold;  
Now I thought that she cared for me,  
Now I thought she was kind  
Only because she was cold.

#### IV

I heard no sound where I stood  
But the rivulet on from the lawn  
Running down to my own dark wood;

Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it  
swell'd  
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;  
But I look'd, and round, all round the  
house I beheld  
The death-white curtain drawn;  
Felt a horror over me creep,  
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
Knew that the death-white curtain meant  
but sleep,  
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of  
the sleep of death.

### XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
And I make myself such evil cheer,  
That if I be dear to some one else,  
Then some one else may have much to  
fear;  
But if I be dear to some one else,  
Then I should be to myself more dear.  
Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,  
If I be dear,  
If I be dear to some one else.

### XVI

#### I

This lump of earth has left his estate  
The lighter by the loss of his weight;  
And so that he find what he went to seek,  
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown  
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,  
He may stay for a year who has gone for a  
week:  
But this is the day when I must speak,  
And I see my Oread coming down,  
O this is the day!  
O beautiful creature, what am I  
That I dare to look her way;  
Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,  
And dream of her beauty with tender  
dread,  
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet  
To the grace that, bright and light as the  
crest  
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,  
To know her beauty might half undo it.

## MAUD

I know it the one bright thing to save  
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,  
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from  
    crime,  
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

### II

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,  
Dare I bid her abide by her word?  
Should I love her so well if she  
Had given her word to a thing so low?  
Shall I love her as well if she  
Can break her word were it even for me?  
I trust that it is not so.

### III

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,  
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,  
For I must tell her before we part,  
I must tell her, or die.

### XVII

Go not, happy day,  
    From the shining fields,  
Go not, happy day,  
    Till the maiden yields.  
Rosy is the West,  
    Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
    And a rose her mouth  
When the happy Yes  
    Falters from her lips,  
Pass and blush the news  
    Over glowing ships;  
Over blowing seas,  
    Over seas at rest,  
Pass the happy news,  
    Blush it thro' the West;  
Till the red man dance  
    By his red cedar-tree,  
And the red man's babe  
    Leap, beyond the sea.  
Blush from West to East,  
    Blush from East to West,  
Till the West is East,  
    Blush it thro' the West.  
Rosy is the West,  
    Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
    And a rose her mouth.

### XVIII

#### I

I have led her home, my love, my only  
    friend.  
There is none like her, none.  
And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
And sweetly, on and on  
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
Full to the banks, close on the promised  
    good.

#### II

None like her, none.  
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering  
    talk  
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,  
And shook my heart to think she comes  
    once more;  
But even then I heard her close the door,  
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is  
    gone.

#### III

There is none like her, none.  
Nor will be when our summers have  
    deceased.  
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
In the long breeze that streams to thy  
    delicious East,  
Sighing for Lebanon,  
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here  
    increased,  
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
And looking to the South, and fed  
With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
And haunted by the starry head  
Of her whose gentle will has changed my  
    fate,  
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;  
And over whom thy darkness must have  
    spread  
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great  
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from  
    whom she came.

#### IV

Here will I lie, while these long branches  
    sway,  
And you fair stars that crown a happy day  
Go in and out as if at merry play,

## MAUD

Who am no more so all forlorn,  
As when it seem'd far better to be born  
To labour and the mattock-harden'd hand,  
Than nursed at ease and brought to under-stand

A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,  
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand

His nothingness into man.

### V

But now shine on, and what care I,  
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl  
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,  
And do accept my madness, and would die  
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

### VI

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give  
More life to Love than is or ever was  
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.  
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;  
It seems that I am happy, that to me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

### VII

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,  
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.  
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,  
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?  
Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,  
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?  
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here  
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear.'

### VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?  
And hark the clock within, the silver knell

Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,  
And died to live, long as my pulses play;  
But now by this my love has closed her sight

And given false death her hand, and stol'n away

To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell

Among the fragments of the golden day.  
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!

Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.  
My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;

It is but for a little space I go:  
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
Beat to the noiseless music of the night!  
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow

Of your soft splendours that you look so bright?

I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.  
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,  
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,

Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe  
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so:  
Let all be well, be well.

## XIX

### I

Her brother is coming back to-night,  
Breaking up my dream of delight.

### II

My dream? do I dream of bliss?  
I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
O when did a morning shine  
So rich in atonement as this  
For my dark-dawning youth,  
Darken'd watching a mother decline  
And that dead man at her heart and mine:  
For who was left to watch her but I?  
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

### III

I trust that I did not talk  
To gentle Maud in our walk

## MAUD

(For often in lonely wanderings  
I have cursed him even to lifeless things)  
But I trust that I did not talk,  
Not touch on her father's sin:  
I am sure I did but speak  
Of my mother's faded cheek  
When it slowly grew so thin,  
That I felt she was slowly dying  
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt:  
For how often I caught her with eyes all  
wet,  
Shaking her head at her son and sighing  
A world of trouble within!

### IV

And Maud too, Maud was moved  
To speak of the mother she loved  
As one scarce less forlorn,  
Dying abroad and it seems apart  
From him who had ceased to share her  
heart,  
And ever mourning over the feud,  
The household Fury sprinkled with blood  
By which our houses are torn:  
How strange was what she said,  
When only Maud and the brother  
Hung over her dying bed—  
That Maud's dark father and mine  
Had bound us one to the other,  
Betrothed us over their wine,  
On the day when Maud was born;  
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.  
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till  
death.  
Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

### V

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat  
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,  
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so  
sweet:  
And none of us thought of a something  
beyond,  
A desire that awoke in the heart of the  
child,  
As it were a duty done to the tomb,  
To be friends for her sake, to be recon-  
ciled;  
And I was cursing them and my doom,  
And letting a dangerous thought run wild  
While often abroad in the fragrant gloom

Of foreign churches—I see her there,  
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer  
To be friends, to be reconciled!

### VI

But then what a flint is he!  
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,  
I find whenever she touch'd on me  
This brother had laugh'd her down,  
And at last, when each came home,  
He had darken'd into a frown,  
Chid her, and forbid her to speak  
To me, her friend of the years before;  
And this was what had reddened her cheek  
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

### VII

Yet Maud, altho' not blind  
To the faults of his heart and mind,  
I see she cannot but love him,  
And says he is rough but kind,  
And wishes me to approve him,  
And tells me, when she lay  
Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
That he left his wine and horses and play,  
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,  
And tended her like a nurse.

### VIII

Kind? but the deathbed desire  
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—  
Rough but kind? yet I know  
He has plotted against me in this,  
That he plots against me still.  
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.  
Well, rough but kind; why let it be so:  
For shall not Maud have her will?

### IX

For, Maud, so tender and true,  
As long as my life endures  
I feel I shall owe you a debt,  
That I never can hope to pay;  
And if ever I should forget  
That I owe this debt to you  
And for your sweet sake to yours;  
O then, what then shall I say?—  
If ever I *should* forget,  
May God make me more wretched  
Than ever I have been yet!

## MAUD

### X

So now I have sworn to bury  
All this dead body of hate,  
I feel so free and so clear  
By the loss of that dead weight,  
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,  
Fantastically merry;  
But that her brother comes, like a blight  
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night. ➤

### XX

#### I

Strange, that I felt so gay,  
Strange, that I tried to-day  
To beguile her melancholy;  
The Sultan, as we name him,—  
She did not wish to blame him—  
But he vexed her and perplexed her  
With his worldly talk and folly:  
Was it gentle to reprove her  
For stealing out of view  
From a little lazy lover  
Who but claims her as his due?  
Or for chilling his caresses  
By the coldness of her manners,  
Nay, the plainness of her dresses?  
Now I know her but in two,  
Nor can pronounce upon it  
If one should ask me whether  
The habit, hat, and feather,  
Or the frock and gipsy bonnet  
Be the neater and completer;  
For nothing can be sweeter  
Than maiden Maud in either.

#### II

But to-morrow, if we live,  
Our ponderous squire will give  
A grand political dinner  
To half the squirelings near;  
And Maud will wear her jewels,  
And the bird of prey will hover,  
And the titmouse hope to win her  
With his chirrup at her ear.

#### III

A grand political dinner  
To the men of many acres,  
A gathering of the Tory,  
A dinner and then a dance

For the maids and marriage-makers,  
And every eye but mine will glance  
At Maud in all her glory.

#### IV

For I am not invited,  
But, with the Sultan's pardon,  
I am all as well delighted,  
For I know her own rose-garden,  
And mean to linger in it  
Till the dancing will be over;  
And then, oh then, come out to me  
For a minute, but for a minute,  
Come out to your own true lover,  
That your true lover may see  
Your glory also, and render  
All homage to his own darling,  
Queen Maud in all her splendour.

### XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,  
And bringing me down from the Hall  
This garden-rose that I found,  
Forgetful of Maud and me,  
And lost in trouble and moving round  
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
And trying to pass to the sea;  
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,  
My Maud has sent it by thee  
(If I read her sweet will right)  
On a blushing mission to me,  
Saying in odour and colour, 'Ah, be  
Among the roses to-night.'

### XXII

#### I

Come into the garden, Maud,  
For the black bat, night, has flown,  
Come into the garden, Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone;  
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,  
And the musk of the rose is blown.

#### II

For a breeze of morning moves,  
And the planet of Love is on high,  
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves  
On a bed of daffodil sky,  
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
To faint in his light, and to die.

## MAUD

### III

All night have the roses heard  
The flute, violin, bassoon;  
All night has the casement jessamine  
stirr'd  
To the dancers dancing in tune;  
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
And a hush with the setting moon.

### IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one  
With whom she has heart to be gay.  
When will the dancers leave her alone?  
She is weary of dance and play.'  
Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
And half to the rising day;  
Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
The last wheel echoes away.

### V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes  
In babble and revel and wine.  
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,  
For one that will never be thine?  
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,  
'For ever and ever, mine.'

### VI

And the soul of the rose went into my  
blood,  
As the music clash'd in the hall;  
And long by the garden lake I stood,  
For I heard your rivulet fall  
From the lake to the meadow and on to the  
wood,  
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

### VII

From the meadow your walks have left so  
sweet  
That whenever a March-wind sighs  
He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
In violets blue as your eyes,  
To the woody hollows in which we meet  
And the valleys of Paradise.

### VIII

The siender acacia would not shake  
One long milk-bloom on the tree;  
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake  
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;

But the rose was awake all night for your  
sake,  
Knowing your promise to me;  
The lilies and roses were all awake,  
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

### IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
Come hither, the dances are done,  
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
Queen lily and rose in one;  
Shine out, little head, sunning over with  
curls,  
To the flowers, and be their sun.

### X

There has fallen a splendid tear  
From the passion-flower at the gate.  
She is coming, my dove, my dear;  
She is coming, my life, my fate;  
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is  
near,'  
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'  
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'  
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

### XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet;  
Were it ever so airy a tread,  
My heart would hear her and beat,  
Were it earth in an earthy bed;  
My dust would hear her and beat,  
Had I lain for a century dead;  
Would start and tremble under her feet,  
And blossom in purple and red.

## PART II

### I

### I

'THE fault was mine, the fault was mine'—  
Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,  
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the  
hill?—  
It is this guilty hand!—  
And there rises ever a passionate cry  
From underneath in the darkening land—  
What is it, that has been done?  
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,  
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising  
sun,

## MAUD

The fires of Hell and of Hate;  
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a  
word,  
When her brother ran in his rage to the  
gate,  
He came with the babe-faced lord;  
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,  
And while she wept, and I strove to be  
cool,

He fiercely gave me the lie,  
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
And he struck me, madman, over the face,  
Struck me before the languid fool,  
Who was gaping and grinning by:  
Struck for himself an evil stroke;  
Wrought for his house an irredeemable  
woe;  
For front to front in an hour we stood,  
And a million horrible bellowing echos  
broke  
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the  
wood,  
And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christ-  
less code,

That must have life for a blow.  
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to  
grow.

Was it he lay there with a fading eye?  
'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly!'  
Then glided out of the joyous wood  
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know;  
And there rang on a sudden a passionate  
cry,  
A cry for a brother's blood:  
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I  
die, till I die.

### II

Is it gone? my pulses beat—  
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?  
Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
A shadow there at my feet,  
High over the shadowy land.  
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle  
rain,  
When they should burst and drown with  
deluging storms  
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and  
lust,  
The little hearts that know not how to  
forgive:

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold  
Thee just,  
Strike dead the whole weak race of veno-  
mous worms,  
That sting each other here in the dust;  
We are not worthy to live.

### II

#### I

See what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,  
Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl,  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design!

### III

What is it? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

### III

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of his house in a rainbow frill?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world?

### IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand!

### V

Breton, not Briton; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear—  
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,



## MAUD

A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
That never came from on high  
Nor ever arose from below,  
But only moves with the moving eye,  
Flying along the land and the main—  
Why should it look like Maud?  
Am I to be overawed  
By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain?

### VI

Back from the Breton coast,  
Sick of a nameless fear,  
Back to the dark sea-line  
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;  
An old song vexes my ear;  
But that of Lamech is mine.

### VII

For years, a measureless ill,  
For years, for ever, to part—  
But she, she would love me still;  
And as long, O God, as she  
Have a grain of love for me,  
So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
However weary, a spark of will  
Not to be trampled out.

### VIII

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
With a passion so intense  
One would think that it well  
Might drown all life in the eye,—  
That it should, by being so overwrought,  
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
For a shell, or a flower, little things  
Which else would have been past by!  
And now I remember, I,  
When he lay dying there,  
I noticed one of his many rings  
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought  
It is his mother's hair.

### IX

Who knows if he be dead?  
Whether I need have fled?  
Am I guilty of blood?  
However this may be,  
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,  
While I am over the sea!

Let me and my passionate love go by,  
But speak to her all things holy and high,  
Whatever happen to me!  
Me and my harmful love go by;  
But come to her waking, find her asleep,  
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,  
And comfort her tho' I die.

### III

Courage, poor heart of stone!  
I will not ask thee why  
Thou canst not understand  
That thou art left for ever alone:  
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—  
Or if I ask thee why,  
Care not thou to reply:  
She is but dead, and the time is at hand  
When thou shalt more than die.

### IV

#### I

O that 'twere possible  
After long grief and pain  
To find the arms of my true love  
Round me once again!

#### II

When I was wont to meet her  
In the silent woody places  
By the home that gave me birth,  
We stood tranced in long embraces  
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter  
Than anything on earth.

#### III

A shadow flits before me,  
Not thou, but like to thee:  
Ah Christ, that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might tell us  
What and where they be.

#### IV

It leads me forth at evening,  
It lightly winds and steals  
In a cold white robe before me,  
When all my spirit reels  
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
And the roaring of the wheels.

## MAUD

### V

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies;  
In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow,  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies.

### VI

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And a dewy splendour falls  
On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls;  
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And the light and shadow fleet;  
She is walking in the meadow,  
And the woodland echo rings;  
In a moment we shall meet;  
She is singing in the meadow  
And the rivulet at her feet  
Ripples on in light and shadow  
To the ballad that she sings.

### VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
My bird with the shining head,  
My own dove with the tender eye?  
But there rings on a sudden a passionate  
cry,  
There is some one dying or dead,  
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;  
For a tumult shakes the city,  
And I wake, my dream is fled;  
In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
Without knowledge, without pity,  
By the curtains of my bed  
That abiding phantom cold.

### VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
Mix not memory with doubt,  
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
Pass and cease to move about!  
'Tis the blot upon the brain  
That *will* show itself without.

### IX

Then I rise, the cavedrops fall,  
And the yellow vapours choke

The great city sounding wide;  
The day comes, a dull red ball  
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
On the misty river-tide.

### X

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
I steal, a wasted frame,  
It crosses here, it crosses there,  
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,  
The shadow still the same;  
And on my heavy eyelids  
My anguish hangs like shame.

### XI

Alas for her that met me,  
That heard me softly call,  
Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall.

### XII

Would the happy spirit descend,  
From the realms of light and song,  
In the chamber or the street,  
As she looks among the blest,  
Should I fear to greet my friend  
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'  
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,  
To the regions of thy rest'?

### XIII

But the broad light glares and beats,  
And the shadow flits and fleets  
And will not let me be;  
And I loathe the squares and streets,  
And the faces that one meets,  
Hearts with no love for me:  
Always I long to creep  
Into some still cavern deep,  
There to weep, and weep, and weep  
My whole soul out to thee.

### V

### I

Dead, long dead,  
Long dead!  
And my heart is a handful of dust,  
And the wheels go over my head,  
And my bones are shaken with pain,

## MAUD

For into a shallow grave they are thrust,  
 Only a yard beneath the street,  
 And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
 The hoofs of the horses beat,  
 Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
 With never an end to the stream of passing  
     feet,  
 Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
 Clamour and rumble, and ringing and  
     clatter,  
 And here beneath it is all as bad,  
 For I thought the dead had peace, but it is  
     not so;  
 To have no peace in the grave, is that not  
     sad?  
 But up and down and to and fro,  
 Ever about me the dead men go;  
 And then to hear a dead man chatter  
 Is enough to drive one mad.

### II

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
 They cannot even bury a man;  
 And tho' we paid our tithes in the days  
     that are gone,  
 Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read;  
 It is that which makes us loud in the world  
     of the dead;  
 There is none that does his work, not one;  
 A touch of their office might have sufficed,  
 But the churchmen fain would kill their  
     church,  
 As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

### III

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
 No limit to his distress;  
 And another, a lord of all things, praying  
 To his own great self, as I guess;  
 And another, a statesman there, betraying  
 His party-secret, fool, to the press;  
 And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
 The case of his patient—all for what?  
 To tickle the maggot born in an empty  
     head,  
 And wheedle a world that loves him not,  
 For it is but a world of the dead.

### IV

Nothing but idiot gabble!  
 For the prophecy given of old

And then not understood,  
 Has come to pass as foretold;  
 Not let any man think for the public good,  
 But babble, merely for babble.  
 For I never whisper'd a private affair  
 Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
 No, not to myself in the closet alone,  
 But I heard it shouted at once from the top  
     of the house;  
 Everything came to be known.  
 Who told *him* we were there?

### V

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not  
     back  
 From the wilderness, full of wolves, where  
     he used to lie;  
 He has gather'd the bones for his o'er-  
     grown whelp to crack;  
 Crack them now for yourself, and howl,  
     and die.

### VI

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
 And curse me the British vermin, the rat;  
 I know not whether he came in the  
     Hanover ship,  
 But I know that he lies and listens mute  
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes:  
 Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,  
 Except that now we poison our babes,  
     poor souls!  
 It is all used up for that.

### VII

Tell him now: she is standing here at my  
     head;  
 Not beautiful now, not even kind;  
 He may take her now; for she never speaks  
     her mind,  
 But is ever the one thing silent here.  
 She is not *of* us, as I divine;  
 She comes from another stiller world of  
     the dead,  
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

### VIII

But I know where a garden grows,  
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
 All made up of the lily and rose  
 That blow by night, when the season is  
     good,

## MAUD

To the sound of dancing music and flutes :  
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
And I almost fear they are not roses, but  
    blood;  
For the keeper was onc, so full of pride,  
He linkt a dead man there to a spectral  
    bride;  
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of  
    brutes,  
Would he have that hole in his side?

### IX

But what will the old man say?  
He laid a cruel snare in a pit  
To catch a friend of mine one stormy  
    day;  
Yet now I could even weep to think  
    of it;  
For what will the old man say  
When he comes to the second corpse in  
    the pit?

### X

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
Then to strike him and lay him low,  
That were a public merit, far,  
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin;  
But the red life spilt for a private blow—  
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war  
Are scarcely even akin.

### XI

O me, why have they not buried me deep  
    enough?  
Is it kind to have made me a grave so  
    rough,  
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?  
Maybe still I am but half-dead;  
Then I cannot be wholly dumb;  
I will cry to the steps above my head  
And somebody, surely, some kind heart  
    will come  
To bury me, bury me  
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

## PART III

### VI

#### I

My life has crept so long on a broken wing  
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,  
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing:  
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year  
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,  
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer  
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns  
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
That like a silent lightning under the stars  
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,  
And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—  
'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,  
Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars  
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

#### II

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight  
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,  
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;  
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair  
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,  
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,

## MAUD

The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,  
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:  
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace  
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,  
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,  
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat  
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

### III

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,  
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I  
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),  
'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'  
And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath  
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,  
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly  
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

### IV

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,  
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;  
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!  
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,  
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar;  
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,  
And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
And the heart of a people beat with one desire;  
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,  
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,  
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

### V

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,  
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble stili,  
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;  
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;  
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,  
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

# IDYLLS OF THE KING

## IN TWELVE BOOKS

'*Flos Regum Arthurus.*'—JOSEPH OF EXETER

### DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory—since he held  
    them dear,  
Perchance as finding there unconsciously  
Some image of himself—I dedicate,  
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—  
These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me  
Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,  
'Who revered his conscience as his king;  
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;  
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd to it;  
Who loved one only and who clave to  
    her—'

Her—over all whose realms to their last  
    isle,  
Commingled with the gloom of imminent  
    war,

The shadow of His loss drew like eclipse,  
Darkening the world. We have lost him:  
    he is gone:

We know him now: all narrow jealousies  
Are silent; and we see him as he moved,  
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,  
    wise,

With what sublime repression of himself,  
And in what limits, and how tenderly;  
Not swaying to this faction or to that;  
Not making his high place the lawless  
    perch

Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground  
For pleasure; but thro' all this tract of  
    years

Wearing the white flower of a blameless  
    life,  
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,

In that fierce light which beats upon a  
    throne,  
And blackens every blot: for where is he,  
Who dares foreshadow for an only son  
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his?  
Or how should England dreaming of *his*  
    sons

Hope more for these than some inheritance  
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
Laborious for her people and her poor—  
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day—  
Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste  
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace—  
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam  
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,  
Beyond all titles, and a household name,  
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still  
    endure;

Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,  
Remembering all the beauty of that star  
Which shone so close beside Thee that ye  
    made

One light together, but has past and leaves  
The Crown a lonely splendour.

May all love,  
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow Thee,  
The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,  
The love of all Thy daughters cherish  
    Thee,  
The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,  
Till God's love set Thee at his side again!

### THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,  
Had one fair daughter, and none other  
    child;

And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,  
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came  
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war  
Each upon other, wasted all the land;  
And still from time to time the heathen  
    host

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was left.

And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,

Wherein the beast was ever more and more,  
But man was less and less, till Arthur came.  
For first Aurelius lived and fought and died,

And after him King Uther fought and died,

But either fail'd to make the kingdom one.  
And after these King Arthur for a space,  
And thro' the puissance of his Table Round,

Drew all their petty principedoms under him,

Their king and head, and made a realm,  
and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,

Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,

And none or few to scare or chase the beast;

So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and bear

Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,

And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.  
And ever and anon the wolf would steal

The children and devour, but now and then,

Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat

To human sucklings; and the children, housed

In her foul den, there at their meat would growl,

And mock their foster-mother on four feet,  
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men,

Worse than the wolves. And King Leodogran

Groan'd for the Roman legions here again,  
And Cæsar's eagle: then his brother king,

Urien, assail'd him: last a heathen horde,  
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth

with blood,  
And on the spike that split the mother's heart

Spitting the child, brake on him, till, amazed,

He knew not whither he should turn for aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly crown'd,

Tho' not without an uproar made by those  
Who cried, 'He is not Uther's son'—the King

Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and help us thou!

For here between the man and beast we die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed of arms,

But heard the call, and came: and Guinevere

Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;

But since he neither wore on helm or shield

The golden symbol of his kinglihood,  
But rode a simple knight among his knights,

And many of these in richer arms than he,  
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,

One among many, tho' his face was bare.  
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,

Felt the light of her eyes into his life  
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and pitch'd

His tents beside the forest. Then he drave  
The heathen; after, slew the beast, and fell'd

The forest, letting in the sun, and made  
Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight

And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,  
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts

Of those great Lords and Barons of his realm  
Flash'd forth and into war: for most of these,

Colleaguings with a score of petty kings,  
Made head against him, crying, 'Who is he

That he should rule us? who hath proven him

King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor  
voice,  
Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.  
This is the son of Gorlois, not the King;  
This is the son of Anton, not the King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to battle,  
felt  
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,  
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere;  
And thinking as he rode, 'Her father said  
That there between the man and beast they  
die.

Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts  
Up to my throne, and side by side with me?  
What happiness to reign a lonely king,  
Vext—O ye stars that shudder over me,  
O earth that soundest hollow under me,  
Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be  
join'd

To her that is the fairest under heaven,  
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,  
And cannot will my will, nor work my  
work

Wholly, nor make myself in mine own  
realm

Victor and lord. But were I join'd with  
her,

Then might we live together as one life,  
And reigning with one will in everything  
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,  
And power on this dead world to make it  
live.'

Thereafter—as he speaks who tells the  
tale—

When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle  
bright

With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the world  
Was all so clear about him, that he saw  
The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,  
And even in high day the morning star.  
So when the King had set his banner  
broad,

At once from either side, with trumpet-  
blast,

And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto  
blood,

The long-lanced battle let their horses run.  
And now the Barons and the kings pre-  
vail'd,

And now the King, as here and there that  
war

Went swaying; but the Powers who walk  
the world

Made lightnings and great thunders over  
him,

And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main  
might,

And mightier of his hands with every blow,  
And leading all his knighthood threw the  
kings

Carádos, Urien, Cradlefont of Wales,  
Claudias, and Clariance of Northumber-  
land,

The King Brandagoras of Latangor,  
With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,  
And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a voice  
As dreadful as the shout of one who sees  
To one who sins, and deems himself alone  
And all the world asleep, they swerved and  
brake

Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the brands  
That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho! they  
yield!'

So like a painted battle the war stood  
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,  
And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord.  
He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he  
loved

And honour'd most. 'Thou dost not doubt  
me King,

So well thine arm hath wrought for me  
to-day.'

'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire of God  
Descends upon thee in the battle-field:  
I know thee for my King!' Whereat the  
two,

For each had warded either in the fight,  
Swore on the field of death a deathless love.  
And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in  
man:

Let chance what will, I trust thee to the  
death.'

Then quickly from the foughten field he  
sent

Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
His new-made knights, to King Leodo-  
gran,

Saying, 'If I in aught have served thee well,  
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife.'



## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in heart  
 Debating—'How should I that am a king,  
 However much he help me at my need,  
 Give my one daughter saving to a king,  
 And a king's son?'—lifted his voice, and  
 call'd  
 A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom  
 He trusted all things, and of him required  
 His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught of  
 Arthur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and  
 said,  
 'Sir King, there be but two old men that  
 know:  
 And each is twice as old as I; and one  
 Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served  
 King Uther thro' his magic art; and one  
 Is Merlin's master (so they call him) Bleys,  
 Who taught him magic; but the scholar  
 ran  
 Before the master, and so far, that Bleys  
 Laid magic by, and sat him down, and  
 wrote  
 All things and whatsoever Merlin did  
 In one great annal-book, where after-years  
 Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran replied,  
 'O friend, had I been holpen half as well  
 By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,  
 Then beast and man had had their share  
 of me:  
 But summon here before us yet once more  
 Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him, the  
 King said,  
 'I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser  
 fowl,  
 And reason in the chase: but wherefore  
 now  
 Do these your lords stir up the heat of war,  
 Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,  
 Others of Anton? Tell me, ye yourselves,  
 Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son?'

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd, 'Ay.'  
 Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights  
 Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,  
 spake—

For bold in heart and act and word was he,  
 Whenever slander breathed against the  
 King—

'Sir, there be many rumours on this  
 head:  
 For there be those who hate him in their  
 hearts,  
 Call him baseborn, and since his ways are  
 sweet,  
 And theirs are bestial, hold him less than  
 man:  
 And there be those who deem him more  
 than man,  
 And dream he dropt from heaven: but my  
 belief  
 In all this matter—so ye care to learn—  
 Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time  
 The prince and warrior Gorlois, he that  
 held  
 Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,  
 Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne:  
 And daughters had she borne him,—one  
 whereof,  
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,  
 Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved  
 To Arthur,—but a son she had not borne.  
 And Uther cast upon her eyes of love:  
 But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,  
 So loathed the bright dishonour of his love,  
 That Gorlois and King Uther went to war:  
 And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.  
 Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged  
 Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,  
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their walls,  
 Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,  
 And there was none to call to but himself.  
 So, compass'd by the power of the King,  
 Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,  
 And with a shameful swiftness: afterward,  
 Not many moons, King Uther died him-  
 self,  
 Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule  
 After him, lest the realm should go to  
 wrack.  
 And that same night, the night of the new  
 year,  
 By reason of the bitterness and grief  
 That vexed his mother, all before his time  
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born  
 Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

To Merlin, to be holden far apart  
 Until his hour should come; because the  
 lords  
 Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,  
 Wild beasts, and surely would have torn  
 the child  
 Piecemeal among them, had they known;  
 for each  
 But sought to rule for his own self and  
 hand,  
 And many hated Uther for the sake  
 Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took the  
 child,  
 And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight  
 And ancient friend of Uther; and his wife  
 Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him  
 with her own;  
 And no man knew. And ever since the  
 lords  
 Have foughten like wild beasts among  
 themselves,  
 So that the realm has gone to wrack: but  
 now,  
 'This year, when Merlin (for his hour had  
 come)  
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the  
 hall,  
 Proclaiming, "Here is Uther's heir, your  
 king,"  
 A hundred voices cried, "Away with him!  
 No king of ours! a son of Gorlois he,  
 Or else the child of Anton, and no king,  
 Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro' his  
 craft,  
 And while the people clamour'd for a king,  
 Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the great  
 lords  
 Banded, and so brake out in open war.'

Then while the King debated with him-  
 self  
 If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,  
 Or born the son of Gorlois, after death,  
 Or Uther's son, and born before his  
 time,  
 Or whether there were truth in anything  
 Said by these three, there came to Came-  
 liard,  
 With Gawain and young Modred, her two  
 sons,  
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent;

Whom as he could, not as he would, the  
 King  
 Made feast for, saying, as they sat at meat,

'A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.  
 Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor his  
 men  
 Report him! Yea, but ye—think ye this  
 king—  
 So many those that hate him, and so strong,  
 So few his knights, however brave they  
 be—  
 Hath body enow to hold his foemen down?'

'O King,' she cried, 'and I will tell thee:  
 few,  
 Few, but all brave, all of one mind with  
 him;  
 For I was near him when the savage yells  
 Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat  
 Crown'd on the dais, and his warriors cried,  
 "Be thou the king, and we will work thy  
 will  
 Who love Thee." Then the King in low  
 deep tones,  
 And simple words of great authority,  
 Bound them by so strait vows to his own  
 self,  
 That when they rose, knighted from kneel-  
 ing, some  
 Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,  
 Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one  
 who wakes  
 Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

'But when he spake and cheer'd his  
 Table Round  
 With large, divine, and comfortable words,  
 Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I beheld  
 From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash  
 A momentary likeness of the King:  
 And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross  
 And those around it and the Crucified,  
 Down from the casement over Arthur,  
 smote  
 Flame-colour, vert and azure, in three  
 rays,  
 One falling upon each of three fair queens,  
 Who stood in silence near his throne, the  
 friends  
 Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright  
 Sweet faces, who will help him at his need.

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

'And there I saw mage Merlin, whose  
vast wit  
And hundred winters are but as the hands  
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

'And near him stood the Lady of the  
Lake,

Who knows a subtler magic than his own—  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.  
She gave the King his huge cross-hilted  
sword,

Whereby to drive the heathen out: a mist  
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face  
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom;  
But there was heard among the holy  
hymns

A voice as of the waters, for she dwells  
Down in a deep; calm, whatsoever storms  
May shake the world, and when the surface  
rolls,

Hath power to walk the waters like our  
Lord.

'There likewise I beheld Excalibur  
Before him at his crowning borne, the  
sword

That rose from out the bosom of the lake,  
And Arthur row'd across and took it—rich  
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,  
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so  
bright

That men are blinded by it—on one side,  
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this  
world,

"Take me," but turn the blade and ye  
shall see,

And written in the speech ye speak your-  
self,

"Cast me away!" And sad was Arthur's  
face

Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,  
"Take thou and strike! the time to cast  
away

Is yet far-off." So this great brand the king  
Took, and by this will beat his foemen  
down.'

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought  
To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,  
Fixing full eyes of question on her face,  
'The swallow and the swift are near akin,

But thou art closer to this noble prince,  
Being his own dear sister;' and she said,  
'Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I;'  
'And therefore Arthur's sister?' ask'd the  
King.

She answer'd, 'These be secret things,' and  
sign'd

To those two sons to pass, and let them be.  
And Gawain went, and breaking into song  
Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair  
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw:

But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,  
And there half-heard; the same that after-  
ward

Struck for the throne, and striking found  
his doom.

And then the Queen made answer,  
'What know I?

For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,  
And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark  
Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther too,  
Wellnigh to blackness; but this King is fair  
Beyond the race of Britons and of men.

Moreover, always in my mind I hear  
A cry from out the dawning of my life,  
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,  
"O that ye had some brother, pretty one,  
To guard thee on the rough ways of the  
world."

'Ay,' said the King, 'and hear ye such a  
cry?

But when did Arthur chance upon thee  
first?

'O King!' she cried, 'and I will tell thee  
true:

He found me first when yet a little maid:  
Beaten I had been for a little fault  
Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran  
And flung myself down on a bank of heath,  
And hated this fair world and all therein,  
And wept, and wish'd that I were dead;  
and he—

I know not whether of himself he came,  
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can  
walk

Unseen at pleasure—he was at my side,  
And spake sweet words, and comforted my  
heart,

And dried my tears, being a child with me.

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

And many a time he came, and evermore  
 As I grew greater grew with me; and sad  
 At times he seem'd, and sad with him  
 was I,  
 Stern too at times, and then I loved him  
 not,  
 But sweet again, and then I loved him well.  
 And now of late I see him less and less,  
 But those first days had golden hours for  
 me,  
 For then I surely thought he would be  
 king.

'But let me tell thee now another tale:  
 For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they say,  
 Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,  
 To hear him speak before he left his life.  
 Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the  
 mage;  
 And when I enter'd told me that himself  
 And Merlin ever served about the King,  
 Uther, before he died; and on the night  
 When Uther in Tintagil past away  
 Moaning and waiting for an heir, the two  
 Left the still King, and passing forth to  
 breathe,  
 Then from the castle gateway by the  
 chasm  
 Descending thro' the dismal night—a night  
 In which the bounds of heaven and earth  
 were lost—  
 Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps  
 It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape  
 thereof  
 A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern  
 Bright with a shining people on the decks,  
 And gone as soon as seen. And then the  
 two  
 Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great  
 sea fall,  
 Wave after wave, each mightier than the  
 last,  
 Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the  
 deep  
 And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged  
 Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:  
 And down the wave and in the flame was  
 borne  
 A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,  
 Who stooped and caught the babe, and cried  
 "The King!

Here is an heir for Uther!" And the fringe,  
 Of that great breaker, sweeping up the  
 strand,  
 Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,  
 And all at once all round him rose in fire,  
 So that the child and he were clothed in  
 fire.  
 And presently thereafter follow'd calm,  
 Free sky and stars: "And this same child,"  
 he said,  
 "Is he who reigns; nor could I part in  
 peace  
 Till this were told." And saying this the  
 scer  
 Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of  
 death,  
 Not ever to be question'd any more  
 Save on the further side; but when I met  
 Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were  
 truth—  
 The shining dragon and the naked child  
 Descending in the glory of the seas—  
 He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me  
 In riddling triplets of old time, and said:

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the  
 sky!  
 A young man will be wiser by and by;  
 An old man's wit may wander ere he die.  
 Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the  
 lea!  
 And truth is this to me, and that to thee;  
 And truth or clothed or naked let it be.  
 Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom  
 blows:  
 Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who  
 knows?  
 From the great deep to the great deep he  
 goes."

"So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but  
 thou  
 Fear not to give this King thine only child,  
 Guinevere: so great bards of him will sing  
 Hereafter; and dark sayings from of old  
 Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of  
 men,  
 And echo'd by old folk beside their fires  
 For comfort after their wage-work is done,  
 Speak of the King; and Merlin in our time  
 Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

Tho' men may wound him that he will  
not die,  
But pass, again to come; and then or now  
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,  
'Till these and all men hail him for their  
king.'

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced,  
But musing 'Shall I answer yea or nay?'  
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept,  
and saw,  
Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,  
Field after field, up to a height, the peak  
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,  
Now looming, and now lost; and on the  
slope  
The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was  
driven,  
Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof  
and rick,  
In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,  
Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with  
the haze  
And made it thicker; while the phantom  
king  
Sent out at times a voice; and here or  
there  
Stood one who pointed toward the voice,  
the rest  
Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king of  
ours,  
No son of Uther, and no king of ours;'  
'Till with a wink his dream was changed,  
the haze  
Descended, and the solid earth became  
As nothing, but the King stood out in  
heaven,  
Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent  
Ulfius, and Brastias and Bedivere,  
Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom  
he loved  
And honour'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride  
forth  
And bring the Queen;—and watch'd him  
from the gates:  
And Lancelot past away among the flowers,  
(For then was latter April) and return'd  
Among the flowers, in May, with Guine-  
vere.

To whom arrived, by Dubric the high  
saint,  
Chief of the church in Britain, and before  
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the  
King  
That morn was married, while in stainless  
white,  
The fair beginners of a nobler time,  
And glorying in their vows and him, his  
knights  
Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.  
Far shone the fields of May thro' open  
door,  
The sacred altar blossom'd white with  
May,  
The Sun of May descended on their King,  
They gazed on all earth's beauty in their  
Queen,  
Roll'd incense, and there past along the  
hymns  
A voice as of the waters, while the two  
Swore at the shrine of Christ a deathless  
love:  
And Arthur said, 'Behold, thy doom is  
mine.  
Let chance what will, I love thee to the  
death!'  
To whom the Queen replied with drooping  
eyes,  
'King and my lord, I love thee to the  
death!'  
And holy Dubric spread his hands and  
spake,  
'Reign ye, and live and love, and make the  
world  
Other, and may thy Queen be one with  
thee,  
And all this Order of thy Table Round  
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their  
King!'

So Dubric said; but when they left the  
shrine  
Great Lords from Rome before the portal  
stood,  
In scornful stillness gazing as they past;  
Then while they paced a city all on fire  
With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets  
blew,  
And Arthur's knighthood sang before the  
King:—

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

'Blow trumpet, for the world is white  
with May;  
Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd  
away!

Blow thro' the living world—"Let the  
King reign."

'Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's  
realm?

Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe upon  
helm,

Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the  
King reign.

'Strike for the King and live! his knights  
have heard

That God hath told the King a secret word.  
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the  
King reign.

'Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the  
dust.

Blow trumpet! live the strength and die  
the lust!

Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the  
King reign.

'Strike for the King and die! and if thou  
diest,

The King is King, and ever wills the  
highest.

Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the  
King reign.

'Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!  
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!

Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the  
King reign.

'The King will follow Christ, and we  
the King  
In whom high God hath breathed a secret  
thing.

Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the  
King reign.'

So sang the knighthood, moving to their  
hall.

There at the banquet those great Lords  
from Rome,

The slowly-fading mistress of the world,  
Strode in, and claim'd their tribute as of  
yore.

But Arthur spake, 'Behold, for these have  
sworn

To wage my wars, and worship me their  
King;

The old order changeth, yielding place to  
new;

And we that fight for our fair father Christ,  
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and old  
To drive the heathen from your Roman  
wall,

No tribute will we pay:' so those great  
lords

Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove  
with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a  
space

Were all one will, and thro' that strength  
the King

Drew in the petty principedoms under him,  
Fought, and in twelve great battles over-  
came

The heathen hordes, and made a realm and  
reign'd.

## THE ROUND TABLE

GARETH AND LYNETTE  
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT  
GERAINT AND ENID  
BALIN AND BALAN  
MERLIN AND VIVIEN

GARETH AND LYNETTE

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,  
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring  
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted Pine

LANCELOT AND ELAINE  
THE HOLY GRAIL  
PELLEAS AND ETARRE  
THE LAST TOURNAMENT  
GUINEVERE

Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away.  
'How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as a  
false knight

Or evil king before my lance if lance  
Were mine to use—O senseless cataract.

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Bearing all down in thy precipitancy—  
And yet thou art but swollen with cold  
snows

And mine is living blood: thou dost His  
will,

The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that  
know,

Have strength and wit, in my good mother's  
hall

Linger with vacillating obedience,  
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and whistled  
to—

Since the good mother holds me still a  
child!

Good mother is bad mother unto me!  
A worse were better; yet no worse would I.  
Heaven yield her for it, but in me put force  
To weary her ears with one continuous  
prayer,

Until she let me fly discaged to sweep  
In ever-highering eagle-circles up

To the great Sun of Glory, and thence  
swoop

Down upon all things base, and dash them  
dead,

A knight of Arthur, working out his will,  
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when  
he came

With Modred hither in the summertime,  
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven  
knight.

Modred for want of worthier was the  
judge.

Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,  
"Thou hast half prevail'd against me,"  
said so—he—

Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,  
For he is alway sullen: what care I?

And Gareth went, and hovering round  
her chair

Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me still the  
child,

Sweet mother, do ye love the child?' She  
laugh'd,

'Thou art but a wild-goose to question it.'

'Then, mother, an ye love the child,' he  
said,

'Being a goose and rather tame than wild,  
Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-  
beloved,

An 'twere but of the goose and golden  
eggs.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling  
eyes,

'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of  
mine

Was finer gold than any goose can lay;  
For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid  
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm  
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.

And there was ever haunting round the  
palm

A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw  
The splendour sparkling from aloft, and  
thought

"An I could climb and lay my hand upon it,  
Then were I wealthier than a leash of  
kings."

But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,  
One, that had loved him from his child-  
hood, caught

And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou  
break thy neck,

I charge thee by my love," and so the boy,  
Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor brake  
his neck,

But brake his very heart in pining for it,  
And past away.'

To whom the mother said,  
'True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself  
and climb'd,

And handed down the golden treasure to  
him.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling  
eyes,

'Gold? said I gold?—ay then, why he, or  
she,

Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world  
Had ventured—*had* the thing I spake of  
been

Mere gold—but this was all of that true  
steel,

Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,  
And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,  
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,  
And there were cries and clashings in the  
nest,

That sent him from his senses: let me go.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and said,  
 'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?  
 Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth  
 Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out!  
 For ever since when traitor to the King  
 He fought against him in the Baron's war,  
 And Arthur gave him back his territory,  
 His age hath slowly droopt, and now ~~lies~~ <sup>he</sup>  
 there  
 A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburiable,  
 No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks,  
 nor knows.  
 And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,  
 Albeit neither loved with that full love  
 I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love:  
 Stay therefore thou; red berries charm the  
 bird,  
 And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the  
 wars,  
 Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang  
 Of wrench'd or broken limb—an often  
 chance  
 In those brain-stunning shocks, and  
 tourney-falls,  
 Frights to my heart; but stay: follow the  
 deer  
 By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns;  
 So make thy manhood mightier day by  
 day;  
 Sweet is the chase: and I will seek thee  
 out  
 Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace  
 Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone  
 year,  
 Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness  
 I know not thee, myself, nor anything.  
 Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy  
 than man.'

Then Gareth, 'An ye hold me yet for  
 child,  
 Hear yet once more the story of the child.  
 For, mother, there was once a King, like  
 ours.  
 The prince his heir, when tall and mar-  
 riageable,  
 Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the King  
 Set two before him. One was fair, strong,  
 arm'd—  
 But to be won by force—and many men

Desired her; one, good lack, no man  
 desired.  
 And these were the conditions of the King:  
 That save he won the first by force, he  
 needs  
 Must wed that other, whom no man  
 desired,  
 A red-faced bride who knew herself so  
 vile,  
 That evermore she long'd to hide herself,  
 Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye—  
 Yea—some she cleaved to, but they died  
 of her.  
 And one—they call'd her Fame; and one,  
 —O Mother,  
 How can ye keep me tether'd to you—  
 Shame.  
 Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.  
 Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the  
 King,  
 Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow  
 the King—  
 Else, wherefore born?'

To whom the mother said,  
 'Sweet son, for there be many who deem  
 him not,  
 Or will not deem him, wholly proven  
 King—  
 Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King,  
 When I was frequent with him in my  
 youth,  
 And heard him Kingly speak, and doubted  
 him  
 No more than he, himself; but felt him  
 mine,  
 Of closest kin to me: yet—wilt thou leave  
 Thine easeful bidding here, and risk thine  
 all,  
 Life, limbs, for one that is not proven  
 King?  
 Stay, till the cloud that settles round his  
 birth  
 Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly, 'Not an  
 hour,  
 So that ye yield me—I will walk thro' fire,  
 Mother, to gain it—your full leave to go.  
 Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd  
 Rome



## GARETH AND LYNETTE

From off the threshold of the realm, and  
crush'd  
The Idolaters, and made the people free?  
Who should be King save him who makes  
us free?"

So when the Queen, who long had  
sought in vain  
To break him from the intent to which he  
grew,  
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,  
She answer'd craftily, 'Will ye walk thro'  
fire?  
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the  
smoke.  
Ay, go then, an ye must: only one proof,  
Before thou ask the King to make thee  
knight,  
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,  
Thy mother,—I demand.'

And Gareth cried,  
'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.  
Nay—quick! the proof to prove me to the  
quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking at  
him,  
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's  
hall,  
And hire thyself to serve for meats and  
drinks  
Among the scullions and the kitchen-  
knaves,  
And those that hand the dish across the bar.  
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to anyone.  
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a  
day.'

For so the Queen believed that when  
her son  
Beheld his only way to glory lead  
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,  
Her own true Gareth was too princely-  
proud  
To pass thereby; so should he rest with  
her,  
Closed in her castle from the sound of  
arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied,  
'The thrall in person may be free in soul,

And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,  
And since thou art my mother, must obey.  
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;  
For hence will I, disguised, and hire my-  
self

To serve with scullions and with kitchen-  
knaves;  
Nor tell my name to any—no, not the  
King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's  
eye  
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,  
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he  
turn'd,  
Perplex his outward purpose, till an hour,  
When waken'd by the wind which with full  
voice  
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to  
dawn,  
He rose, and out of slumber calling two  
That still had tended on him from his  
birth,  
Before the wakeful mother heard him,  
went.

The three were clad like tillers of the  
soil.  
Southward they set their faces. The birds  
made  
Melody on branch, and melody in mid air.  
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into  
green,  
And the live green had kindled into flowers,  
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on the  
plain  
That broaden'd toward the base of Came-  
lot,  
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn  
Rolling her smoke about the Royal mount,  
That rose between the forest and the field.  
At times the summit of the high city  
flash'd;  
At times the spires and turrets half-way  
down  
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great  
gate shone  
Only, that open'd on the field below:  
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,  
One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord.  
Here is a city of Enchanters, built  
By fairy Kings.' The second echo'd him,  
'Lord, we have heard from our wise man  
at home  
To Northward, that this King is not the  
King,  
But only changeling out of Fairyland,  
Who drave the heathen hence by  
sorcery  
And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first  
again,  
'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,  
But all a vision.'

Gareth answer'd them  
With laughter, swearing he had glamour  
enow  
In his own blood, his principedom, youth  
and hopes,  
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;  
So push'd them all unwilling toward the  
gate.  
And there was no gate like it under heaven.  
For barefoot on the keystone, which was  
lined  
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,  
The Lady of the Lake stood: all her dress  
Wept from her sides as water flowing away;  
But like the cross her great and goodly  
arms  
Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld:  
And drops of water fell from either hand;  
And down from one a sword was hung,  
from one  
A censer, either worn with wind and storm;  
And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;  
And in the space to left of her, and right,  
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,  
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time  
Were nothing, so inveterately, that men  
Were giddy gazing there; and over all  
High on the top were those three Queens,  
the friends  
Of Arthur, who should help him at his  
need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a  
space

Stared at the figures, that at last it seem'd  
The dragon-boughts and elvish emblem-  
ings  
Began to move, seethe, twine and curl:  
they call'd  
To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive.'

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his  
eyes  
So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd to  
move.  
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.  
Back from the gate started the three, to  
whom  
From out thereunder came an ancient man,  
Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye, my  
sons?'

Then Gareth, 'We be tillers of the soil,  
Who leaving share in furrow come to see  
The glories of our King: but these, my  
men,  
(Your city moved so weirdly in the mist)  
Doubt if the King be King at all, or come  
From Fairyland; and whether this be built  
By magic, and by fairy Kings and Queens;  
Or whether there be any city at all,  
Or all a vision: and this music now  
Hath scared them both, but tell thou these  
the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer playing  
on him  
And saying, 'Son, I have seen the good  
ship sail  
Keel upward, and mast downward, in the  
heavens,  
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air:  
And here is truth; but an it please thee not,  
Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.  
For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy King  
And Fairy Queens have built the city, son;  
They came from out a sacred mountain-  
cleft  
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in  
hand,  
And built it to the music of their harps.  
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,  
For there is nothing in it as it seems  
Saving the King; tho' some there be that  
hold

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

The King a shadow, and the city real:  
 Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass  
 Beneath this archway, then wilt thou  
     become  
 A thrall to his enchantments, for the King  
 Will bind thee by such vows, as is a shame  
 A man should not be bound by, yet the  
     which  
 No man can keep; but, so thou dread to  
     swear,  
 Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide  
 Without, among the cattle of the field.  
 For an ye heard a music, like enow  
 They are building still, seeing the city is  
     built  
 To music, therefore never built at all,  
 And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake

Anger'd, 'Old Master, reverence thine own  
     beard  
 That looks as white as utter truth, and  
     seems  
 Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall!  
 Why mockest thou the stranger that hath  
     been  
 To thee fair-spoken?'

But the Seer replied,

'Know ye not then the Riddling of the  
     Bards?  
 "Confusion, and illusion, and relation,  
 Elusion, and occasion, and evasion"?  
 I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,  
 And all that see thee, for thou art not who  
 Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou  
     art.  
 And now thou goest up to mock the King,  
 Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie.'

Unmockingly the mocker ending here  
 Turn'd to the right, and past along the  
     plain;  
 Whom Gareth looking after said, 'My men,  
 Our one white lie sits like a little ghost  
 Here on the threshold of our enterprise.  
 Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I:  
 Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer

He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with  
     his twain

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces  
 And stately, rich in emblem and the work  
 Of ancient kings who did their days in  
     stone;  
 Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's  
     court,  
 Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and every-  
     where  
 At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening  
     peak  
 And pinnacle, and had made it spire to  
     heaven.  
 And ever and anon a knight would pass  
 Outward, or inward to the hall: his arms  
 Clash'd; and the sound was good to  
     Gareth's ear.  
 And out of bower and casement shyly  
     glanced  
 Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of  
     love;  
 And all about a healthful people stept  
 As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard  
 A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld  
 Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall  
 The splendour of the presence of the King  
 Throned, and delivering doom—and look'd  
     no more—  
 But felt his young heart hammering in his  
     ears,  
 And thought, 'For this half-shadow of a lie  
 The truthful King will doom me when I  
     speak.'  
 Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find  
 Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one  
 Nor other, but in all the listening eyes  
 Of those tall knights, that ranged about the  
     throne,  
 Clear honour shining like the dewy star  
 Of dawn, and faith in their great King,  
     with pure  
 Affection, and the light of victory,  
 And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King,  
 'A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther, reft  
 From my dead lord a field with violence:  
 For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,  
 Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,  
 We yielded not; and then he reft us of it  
 Perforce, and left us neither gold nor field.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye? gold  
or field?'  
To whom the woman weeping, 'Nay, my  
lord,  
The field was pleasant in my husband's  
eye.'

And Arthur, 'Have thy pleasant field  
again,  
And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,  
According to the years. No boon is here,  
But justice, so thy say be proven true.  
Accursed, who from the wrongs his father  
did  
Would shape himself a right!'

And while she past,  
Came yet another widow crying to him,  
'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King,  
am I.  
With thine own hand thou slewest my dear  
lord,  
A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,  
When Lot and many another rose and  
fought  
Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.  
I held with these, and loathe to ask thee  
ought.  
Yet lo! my husband's brother had my son  
Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved him  
dead;  
And standeth seized of that inheritance  
Which thou that slewest the sire hast left  
the son.  
So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,  
Grant me some knight to do the battle  
for me,  
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my  
son.'

Then strode a good knight forward,  
crying to him,  
'A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.  
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the  
man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and  
cried,  
'A boon, Sir King! ev'n that thou grant  
her none,  
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full  
hall—

None; or the wholesome boon of gyve and  
gag.'

But Arthur, 'We sit King, to help the  
wrong'd  
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her  
lord.

Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and  
hates!

The kings of old had doom'd thee to the  
flames,

Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee  
dead,

And Uther slit thy tongue: but get thee  
hence—

Lest that rough humour of the kings of old  
Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,

Go likewise; lay him low and slay him not,  
But bring him here, that I may judge thee  
right,

According to the justice of the King:  
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King  
Who lived and died for men, the man shall  
die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of  
Mark,

A name of evil savour in the land,  
The Cornish king. In either hand he bore  
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as  
shines

A field of charlock in the sudden sun  
Between two showers, a cloth of palest  
gold,

Which down he laid before the throne, and  
knelt,

Delivering, that his lord, the vassal king,  
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;  
For having heard that Arthur of his grace  
Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram,  
knight,

And, for himself was of the greater state,  
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord  
Would yield him this large honour all the  
more;

So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of  
gold,

In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to  
rend

In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The goodly knight!

What! shall the shield of Mark stand among these?'

For, midway down the side of that long hall

A stately pile,—whereof along the front,  
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some blank,

There ran a treble range of stony shields,—  
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the hearth.

And under every shield a knight was named:

For this was Arthur's custom in his hall;  
When some good knight had done one noble deed,

His arms were carven only; but if twain  
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none,  
The shield was blank and bare without a sign

Saving the name beneath; and Gareth saw  
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and bright,

And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur cried

To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

'More like are we to reave him of his crown

Than make him knight because men call him king.

The kings we found, ye know we stay'd their hands

From war among themselves, but left them kings;

Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,  
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them we enroll'd

Among us, and they sit within our hall.  
But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of king,

As Mark would sully the low state of churl:  
And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,  
Return, and meet, and hold him from our eyes,

Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,  
Silenced for ever—craven—a man of plots,  
Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambushings—

No fault of thine: let Kay the seneschal

Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied—

Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be seen!'

And many another suppliant crying came

With noise of ravage wrought by beast and man,

And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily  
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his men,

Approach'd between them toward the King, and ask'd,

'A boon, Sir King (his voice was all ashamed),

For see ye not how weak and hungerworn  
I seem—leaning on these? grant me to serve

For meat and drink among thy kitchen-knaves

A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my name.

Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King,  
'A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon!  
But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must

Kay,  
The master of the meats and drinks, be thine.'

He rose and past; then Kay, a man of mien

Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself  
Root-bitten by white lichen,

'Lo ye now!  
This fellow hath broken from some Abbey, where,

God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,  
However that might chance! but an he work,

Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,  
And sleeker shall he shine than any hog.'

Then Lancelot standing near, 'Sir Seneschal,

Slouth-hound thou knowest, and gray, and all the hounds;

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not know:

Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,

High nose, a nostril large and fine, and hands

Large, fair and fine!—Some young lad's mystery—

But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the boy

Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace, Lest he should come to shame thy judging of him.'

Then Kay, 'What murmurest thou of mystery?

Think ye this fellow will poison the King's dish?

Nay, for he spake too fool-like: mystery! Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd For horse and armour: fair and fine, forsooth!

Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see thou to it

That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some fine day

Undo thee not—and leave my man to me.'

So Gareth all for glory underwent The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage; Ate with young lads his portion by the door,

And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-knives.

And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly, But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not, Would hustle and harry him, and labour him

Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set To turn the broach, draw water, or hew wood,

Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd himself

With all obedience to the King, and wrought

All kind of service with a noble ease That graced the lowliest act in doing it. And when the thralls had talk among themselves,

And one would praise the love that linkt the King

And Lancelot—how the King had saved his life

In battle twice, and Lancelot once the King's—

For Lancelot was the first in Tournament, But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field— Gareth was glad. Or if some other told, How once the wandering forester at dawn, Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas, On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King, A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake, 'He passes to the Isle Avilion,

He passes and is heal'd and cannot die'— Gareth was glad. But if their talk were foul, Then would he whistle rapid as any lark, Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud That first they mock'd, but, after, reverenced him.

Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale Of knights, who sliced a red life-bubbling way

Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates Lying or sitting round him, idle hands, Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal, would come

Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind Among dead leaves, and drive them all apart.

Or when the thralls had sport among themselves,

So there were any trial of mastery, He, by two yards in casting bar or stone Was counted best; and if there chanced a joust,

So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go, Would hurry thither, and when he saw the knights

Clash like the coming and retiring wave, And the spear spring, and good horse reel, the boy

Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the thralls;

But in the weeks that follow'd, the good Queen,

Repentant of the word she made him swear, And saddening in her childless castle, sent, Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Arms for her son, and loosed him from his  
vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of  
Lot  
With whom he used to play at tourney  
once,  
When both were children, and in lonely  
haunts  
Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,  
And each at either dash from either end—  
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth  
joy.  
He laugh'd; he sprang. 'Out of the smoke,  
at once  
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knec—  
These news be mine, none other's—nay,  
the King's—  
Descend into the city:' whereon he sought  
The King alone, and found, and told him  
all.

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in  
a tilt  
For pastime; yea, he said it: joust can I.  
Make me thy knight—in secret! let my  
name  
Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest, I  
spring  
Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye  
Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush,  
and bow  
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him,  
'Son, the good mother let me know thee  
here,  
And sent her wish that I would yield thee  
thine.  
Make thee my knight? my knights are  
sworn to vows  
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,  
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,  
And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his  
knees,  
'My King, for hardihood I can promise  
thee.  
For uttermost obedience make demand  
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,  
No mellow master of the meats and drinks!

And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,  
But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King—  
'Make thee my knight in secret? yea,  
but he,  
Our noblest brother, and our truest man,  
And one with me in all, he needs must  
know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let  
Lancelot know,  
Thy noblest and thy truest!'

And the King—  
'But wherefore would ye men should won-  
der at you?  
Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,  
And the deed's sake my knighthood do the  
deed,  
Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd,  
'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking of it?  
Let be my name until I make my name!  
My deeds will speak: it is but for a day.'  
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm  
Smiled the great King, and half-unwillingly  
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.  
Then, after summoning Lancelot privily,  
'I have given him the first quest: he is not  
proven.  
Look therefore when he calls for this in  
hall,  
Thou get to horse and follow him far away,  
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see  
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor  
slain.'

Then that same day there past into the  
hall  
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow  
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-  
blossom,  
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender  
nose  
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;  
She into hall past with her page and cried,  
'O King, for thou hast driven the foe  
without,  
See to the foe within! bridge, ford, beset

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

By bandits, everyone that owns a tower  
The Lord for half a league. Why sit ye  
there?

Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were king,  
Till ev'n the lonest hold were all as free  
From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-  
cloth  
From that best blood it is a sin to spill.'

'Comfort thyself,' said Arthur, 'I nor  
mine

Rest: so my knighthood keep the vows  
they swore,

The wastest moorland of our realm shall be  
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.

What is thy name? thy need?'

'My name?' she said—

'Lynette my name; noble; my need, a  
knight

To combat for my sister, Lyonors,  
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,  
And comely, yea, and comelier than myself.  
She lives in Castle Perilous: a river  
Runs in three loops about her living-place;  
And o'er it are three passings, and three  
knights

Defend the passings, brethren, and a  
fourth

And of that four the mightiest, holds her  
stay'd

In her own castle, and so besieges her  
To break her will, and make her wed with  
him:

And but delays his purport till thou send  
To do the battle with him, thy chief man  
Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to overthrow,  
Then wed, with glory: but she will not wed  
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.  
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot.'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth  
ask'd,

'Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush  
All wrongers of the Realm. But say, these  
four,

Who be they? What the fashion of the  
men?'

'They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,  
The fashion of that old knight-errantry

Who ride abroad, and do but what they  
will;

Courteous or bestial from the moment,  
such

As have nor law nor king; and three of  
these

Proud in their fantasy call themselves the  
Day,

➤ Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Even-  
ing-Star,

Being strong fools; and never a whit more  
wise

The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in  
black,

A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.  
He names himself the Night and oftener

Death,

And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,  
And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,

To show that who may slay or scape the  
three,

Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.  
And all these four be fools, but mighty

men,

And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he  
rose,

A head with kindling eyes above the throng,  
'A boon, Sir King—this quest!' then—  
for he mark'd

Kay near him groaning like a wounded  
bull—

'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-  
knave am I,

And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks  
am I,

And I can topple over a hundred such.  
Thy promise, King,' and Arthur glancing

at him,

Brought down a momentary brow. 'Rough,  
sudden,

And pardonable, worthy to be knight—  
Go therefore,' and all hearers were

amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame,  
pride, wrath

Slew the May-white: she lifted either arm,  
'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief

knight,



## GARETH AND LYNETTE

And thou hast given me but a kitchen-  
knave.'  
Then ere a man in hall could stay her,  
turn'd,  
Fled down the lane of access to the King,  
Took horse, descended the slope street,  
and past  
The weird white gate, and paused without,  
beside  
The field of tourney, murmuring 'kitchen-  
knave.'

Now two great entries open'd from the  
hall,  
At one end one, that gave upon a range  
Of level pavement where the King would  
pace  
At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;  
And down from this a lordly stairway  
sloped  
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of  
towers;  
And out by this main doorway past the  
King.  
But one was counter to the hearth, and  
rose  
High that the highest-crested helm could  
ride  
Therethro' nor graze: and by this entry  
fled  
The damsel in her wrath, and on to this  
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the  
door  
King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a  
town,  
A warhorse of the best, and near it stood  
The two that out of north had follow'd  
him:  
This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that  
held  
The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth  
loosed  
A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to heel,  
A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,  
And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,  
That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and  
flash'd as those  
Dull-coated things, that making slide apart  
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there  
burns  
A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.

So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.  
Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the  
shield  
And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of  
grain  
Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and  
tipst  
With trenchant steel, around him slowly  
prest  
The people, while from out of kitchen  
came  
The thralls in throng, and seeing who had  
work'd  
Lustier than any, and whom they could  
but love,  
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and  
cried,  
'God bless the King, and all his fellowship!'  
And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode  
Down the slope street, and past without  
the gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the cur  
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his  
cause  
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being named,  
His owner, but remembers all, and growls  
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door  
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used  
To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest  
With horse and arms—the King hath past  
his time—  
My scullion knave! Thralls to your work  
again,  
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!  
Will there be dawn in West and eve in  
East?  
Begone!—my knave!—belike and like  
enow  
Some old head-blow not heeded in his  
youth  
So shook his wits they wander in his  
prime—  
Crazed! How the villain lifted up his voice,  
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-  
knave.  
Tut: he was tame and meek enow with me,  
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.  
Well—I will after my loud knave, and learn

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Whether he know me for his master yet.  
Out of the smoke he came, and so my lance  
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the  
mire—

Thence, if the King awoken from his craze,  
Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said,  
'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the  
King,

For that did never he whereon ye rail,  
But ever meekly served the King in thee?  
Abide: take counsel; for this lad is great  
And lusty, and knowing both of lance and  
sword.'

'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are over-  
fine

To mar stout knaves with foolish courtes-  
ies.'

Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode  
Down the slope city, and out beyond the  
gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet  
Mutter'd the damsel, 'Wherefore did the  
King

Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt, at  
least

He might have yielded to me one of those  
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,  
Rather than—O sweet heaven! O fie upon  
him—

His kitchen-knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew  
(And there were none but few goodlier  
than he)

Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is mine.  
Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as one  
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the  
holt,  
And deems it carrion of some woodland  
thing,

Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender nose  
With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling,  
'Hence!

Avoid, thou smelllest all of kitchen-grease.  
And look who comes behind,' for there  
was Kay.

'Knowest thou not me? thy master? I am  
Kay.

We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,  
'Master no more! too well I know thee,  
ay—

The most ungentle knight in Arthur's hall.'  
'Have at thee then,' said Kay: they shock'd,  
and Kay

Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,  
'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly  
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse  
Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,  
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke.

'What doest thou, scullion, in my fellow-  
ship?

Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the  
more

Or love thee better, that by some device  
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,  
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy  
master—thou!—

Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!—  
to me

Thou smelllest all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd gently,  
'say

Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,  
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,  
Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it?  
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he  
talks!

The listening rogue hath caught the man-  
ner of it.

But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with,  
knave,

And then by such a one that thou for all  
The kitchen brewis that was ever supt  
Shalt not once dare to look him in the face.'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a smile  
That madden'd her, and away she flash'd  
again

Down the long avenues of a boundless  
wood,

And Gareth following was again beknaved.

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the only  
way

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Where Arthur's men are set along the  
wood;  
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as  
leaves:  
If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but yet,  
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of  
thine?  
Fight, an thou canst: I have miss'd the  
only way.'

So till the dusk that follow'd evensong  
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;  
Then after one long slope was mounted,  
saw,  
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand  
pines  
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink  
To westward—in the deeps whereof a  
mere,  
Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,  
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and  
shouts  
Ascended, and there brake a servingman  
Flying from out of the black wood, and  
crying,  
'They have bound my lord to cast him in  
the mere.'  
Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right the  
wrong'd,  
But straitlier bound am I to bide with thee.'  
And when the damsel spake contempt-  
uously,  
'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried again,  
'Follow, I lead!' so down among the pines  
He plunged; and there, blackshadow'd  
nigh the mere,  
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,  
Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,  
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.  
Three with good blows he quieted, but  
three  
Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed  
the stone  
From off his neck, then in the mere beside  
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.  
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free  
feet  
Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's friend.

'Well that ye came, or else these caitiff  
rogues

Had wreak'd themselves on me; good  
cause is theirs  
To hate me, for my wont hath ever been  
To catch my thief, and then like vermin  
here  
Drown him, and with a stone about his  
neck;  
And under this wan water many of them  
Lic rotting, but at night let go the stone,  
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light  
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have  
saved a life  
Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this  
wood.  
And fain would I reward thee worship-  
fully.  
What guerdon will ye?'

Gareth sharply spake,  
'None! for the deed's sake have I done the  
deed,  
In uttermost obedience to the King.  
But wilt thou yield this damsel harbour-  
age?'

Whereat the Baron saying, 'I well  
believe  
You be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh  
Broke from Lynette, 'Ay, truly of a truth,  
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-  
knave!—  
But deem not I accept thee aught the  
more,  
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit  
Down on a rout of craven foresters.  
A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.  
Nay—for thou smellest of the kitchen  
still.  
But an this lord will yield us harbourage,  
Well.'

So she spake. A league beyond the  
wood,  
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,  
His towers where that day a feast had been  
Held in high hall, and many a viand left,  
And many a costly cate, received the three.  
And there they placed a peacock in his  
pride  
Before the damsel, and the Baron set  
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

'Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,  
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.  
Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur's  
hall,

And pray'd the King would grant me  
Lancelot

To fight the brotherhood of Day and  
Night—

The last a monster unsubduable  
Of any save of him for whom I call'd—  
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-  
knave,

"The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave  
am I,

And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks  
am I."

Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,  
"Go therefore," and so gives the quest to  
him—

Him—here—a villain fitter to stick swine  
Than ride abroad redressing women's  
wrong,

Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.'

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed,  
the lord

Now look'd at one and now at other, left  
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,  
And, seating Gareth at another board,  
Sat down beside him, ate and then began.

'Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave,  
or not,

Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,  
And whether she be mad, or else the King,  
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,  
I ask not: but thou strikest a strong stroke,  
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,  
And saver of my life; and therefore now,  
For here be mighty men to joust with,  
weigh

Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel  
back

To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.  
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,  
The saver of my life.'

And Gareth said,  
'Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,  
Despite of Day and Night and Death and  
Hell.'

So when, next morn, the lord whose life  
he saved

Had, some brief space, convey'd them on  
their way

And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth  
spake,

'Lead, and I follow.' Haughtily she replied,

'I fly no more: I allow thee for an hour.  
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,  
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore,  
methinks

Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt  
thou, fool?

For hard by here is one will overthrow  
And slay thee: then will I to court again,  
And shame the King for only yielding me  
My champion from the ashes of his hearth.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd cour-  
teously,

'Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.  
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find  
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay  
Among the ashes and wedded the King's  
son.'

Then to the shore of one of those long  
loops

Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they  
came.

Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep;  
the stream

Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc  
Took at a leap; and on the further side  
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold  
In streaks and rays, and all leant-lily in hue,  
Save that the dome was purple, and above,  
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.

And therefore the lawless warrior paced  
Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this he,  
The champion thou hast brought from  
Arthur's hall?

For whom we let thee pass.' 'Nay, nay,'  
she said,

'Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter  
scorn

Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee  
here

His kitchen-knave: and look thou to thy-  
self:

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

See that he fall not on thee suddenly,  
And slay thee unarm'd: he is not knight  
but knave.'

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the  
Dawn,  
And servants of the Morning-Star, ap-  
proach,  
Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-folds  
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair  
girls

In gilt and rosy raiment came: their feet  
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair  
All over glanced with dewdrop or with  
gem  
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.  
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave a  
shield

Blue also, and thereon the morning star.  
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,  
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was  
brought,  
Glorying; and in the stream beneath him,  
shone  
Immingled with Heaven's azure waver-  
ingly,  
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,  
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him, 'Wherefore  
stare ye so?  
Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is time:  
Flee down the valley before he get to  
horse.  
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight  
but knave.'

Said Gareth, 'Damsel, whether knave or  
knight,  
Far liefer had I fight a score of times  
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.  
Fair words were best for him who fights  
for thee;  
But truly foul are better, for they send  
That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I  
know  
That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore  
The star, when mounted, cried from o'er  
the bridge,  
'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me!

Such fight not I, but answer scorn with  
scorn.

For this were shame to do him further  
wrong

Than set him on his feet, and take his horse  
And arms, and so return him to the King.  
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,  
knave.

Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave  
To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest.  
I spring from loftier lineage than thine  
own.'

He spake; and all at fiery speed the two  
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either  
spear

Bent but not brake, and either knight at  
once,

Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult  
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,  
Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,  
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his  
brand

He drave his enemy backward down the  
bridge,

The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken, kitchen-  
knave!'

Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one  
stroke

Laid him that clove it grovelling on the  
ground.

Then cried the fall'n, 'Take not my life:  
I yield.'

And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of me  
Good—I accord it easily as a grace.'

She reddening, 'Insolent scullion: I of  
thee?

I bound to thee for any favour ask'd!  
'Then shall he die.' And Gareth there  
unlaced

His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,  
'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay  
One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel, thy  
charge

Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,  
Thy life is thine at her command. Arise  
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say  
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou  
crave

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.  
Myself, when I return, will plead for thee,  
Thy shield is mine—farewell; and, damsel,  
thou,  
Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled.  
Then when he came upon her, spake,  
'Methought,  
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on  
the bridge  
The savour of thy kitchen came upon me  
A little faintlier: but the wind hath  
changed:  
I scent it twenty-fold.' And then she sang,  
"O morning star" (not that tall felon  
there  
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness  
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),  
"O morning star that smilest in the blue,  
O star, my morning dream hath proven  
true,  
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled  
on me."

'But thou begone, take counsel, and  
away,  
For hard by here is one that guards a  
ford—  
The second brother in their fool's parable—  
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.  
Care not for shame: thou art not knight  
but knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laugh-  
ingly,  
'Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.  
When I was kitchen-knave among the rest  
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-  
mates  
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his  
coat,  
"Guard it," and there was none to meddle  
with it.  
And such a coat art thou, and thee the  
King  
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,  
To worry, and not to flee—and—knight  
or knave—  
The knave that doth thee service as full  
knight

Is all as good, meseems, as any knight  
Toward thy sister's freeing.'

'Ay, Sir Knave!  
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a  
knight,  
Being but knave, I hate thee all the more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship me  
the more,  
That, being but knave, I throw thine  
enemies.'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt meet  
thy match.'

So when they touch'd the second river-  
loop,  
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail  
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday  
Sun  
Beyond a ranging shallow. As if the flower,  
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,  
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the  
fierce shield,  
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots  
Before them when he turn'd from watch-  
ing him.  
He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,  
'What doest thou, brother, in my marches  
here?'  
And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,  
'Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's  
hall  
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath  
his arms.'  
'Ugh!' cried the Sun, and vizoring up a  
red  
And cipher face of rounded Foolishness,  
Push'd horse across the foamings of the  
ford,  
Whom Gareth met midstream: no room  
was there  
For lance or tourney-skill: four strokes  
they struck  
With sword, and these were mighty; the  
new knight  
Had fear he might be shamed; but as the  
Sun  
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the  
fifth,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream,  
the stream  
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the  
ford;  
So drew him home; but he that fought no  
more,  
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,  
Yielded; and Gareth sent him to the King.  
'Myself when I return will plead for thee.'  
'Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.  
'Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed  
again?'  
'Nay, not a point: nor art thou victor here.  
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;  
His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I  
saw it.

"O Sun" (not this strong fool whom  
thou, Sir Knave,  
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness),  
"O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,  
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,  
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled  
on me."

'What knowest thou of lovesong or of  
love?  
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly  
born,  
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, per-  
chance,—

"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,  
O dewy flowers that close when day is  
done,  
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled  
on me."

'What knowest thou of flowers, except,  
belike,  
To garnish meats with? hath not our good  
King  
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchen-  
dom,  
A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye  
round  
The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's  
head?  
Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries  
and bay.

"O birds, that warble to the morning  
sky,  
O birds that warble as the day goes by,  
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled  
on me."

'What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis,  
merle,  
Linnet? what dream ye when they utter  
forth  
May-music growing with the growing  
light,  
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the  
snare  
(So runs thy fancy) these be for the spit,  
Larding and basting. See thou have not  
now  
Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.  
There stands the third fool of their  
allegory.'

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow,  
All in a rose-red from the west, and all  
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad  
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the  
knight,  
That named himself the Star of Evening,  
stood.

And Gareth, 'Wherefore waits the mad-  
man there  
Naked in open dayshine?' 'Nay,' she cried,  
'Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins  
That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave  
His armour off him, these will turn the  
blade.'

Then the third brother shouted o'er the  
bridge,  
'O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?  
Thy ward is higher up: but have ye slain  
The damsel's champion?' and the damsel  
cried,

'No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's  
heaven  
With all disaster unto thine and thee!  
For both thy younger brethren have gone  
down  
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir  
Star;  
Art thou not old?'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

'Old, damsel, old and hard,  
Old, with the might and breath of twenty  
boys.'  
Said Gareth, 'Old, and over-bold in brag!  
But that same strength which threw the  
Morning Star  
Can throw the Evening.'

Then that other blew

A hard and deadly note upon the horn.  
'Approach and arm me!' With slow steps  
from out  
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd  
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,  
And arm'd him in old arms, and brought  
a helm  
With but a drying evergreen for crest,  
And gave a shield whereon the Star of  
Even  
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem,  
shone.  
But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,  
They madly hurl'd together on the bridge;  
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,  
There met him drawn, and overthrew him  
again,  
But up like fire he started: and as oft  
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his  
knees,  
So many a time he vaulted up again;  
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great  
heart,  
Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,  
Labour'd within him, for he seem'd as one  
That all in later, sadder age begins  
To war against ill uses of a life,  
But these from all his life arise, and cry,  
'Thou hast made us lords, and canst not  
put us down!'  
He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd to strike  
Vainly, the damsel clamouring all the  
while,  
'Well done, knave-knight, well stricken, O  
good knight-knave—  
O knave, as noble as any of all the knights—  
Shame me not, shame me not. I have  
prophesied—  
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table  
Round—  
His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd  
skin—

Strike—strike—the wind will never change  
again.'  
And Gareth hearing ever stronglier smote,  
And hew'd great pieces of his armour off  
him,  
But lash'd in vain against the harden'd  
skin,  
And could not wholly bring him under,  
more  
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on  
ridge,  
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and  
springs  
For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand  
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt.  
'I have thee now;' but forth that other  
sprang,  
And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry  
arms  
Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,  
Strangled, but straining ev'n his uttermost  
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the  
bridge  
Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,  
'Lead, and I follow.'

But the damsel said,  
'I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;  
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-  
knaves.

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,  
O rainbow with three colours after rain,  
Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath smiled  
on me."

'Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had added  
—Knight,  
But that I heard thee call thyself a knave,—  
Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,  
Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought the  
King  
Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy par-  
don, friend,  
For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,  
And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal  
As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,  
Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou art.'

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to  
blame,  
Saving that you mistrusted our good King



## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking,  
 one  
 Not fit to cope your quest. You said your  
 say;  
 Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth!  
 I hold  
 He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor  
 meet  
 To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets  
 His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat  
 At any gentle damsel's waywardness.  
 Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought  
 for me:  
 And seeing now thy words are fair,  
 methinks  
 There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his  
 great self,  
 Hath force to quell me.'

Nigh upon that hour

When the lone hennet forgets his melancholy,  
 Lets down his other leg, and stretching,  
 dreams  
 Of goodly supper in the distant pool,  
 Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at  
 him,  
 And told him of a cavern hard at hand,  
 Where bread and baken meats and good  
 red wine  
 Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors  
 Had sent her coming champion, waited  
 him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein  
 Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on  
 horse  
 Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning  
 hues.  
 'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was  
 here,  
 Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the  
 rock  
 The war of Time against the soul of  
 man.  
 And yon four fools have suck'd their  
 allegory  
 From these damp walls, and taken but the  
 form.  
 Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt and  
 read—  
 In letters like to those the vexillary

Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming  
 Gelt—  
 'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES'—'HES-  
 PERUS'—  
 'Nox'—'MORS,' beneath five figures,  
 armed men,  
 Slab after slab, their faces forward all,  
 And running down the Soul, a Shape that  
 fled  
 With broken wings, torn raiment and loose  
 hair,  
 For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.  
 'Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,  
 Who comes behind?'

For one—delay'd at first

Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay  
 To Camelot, then by what thereafter  
 chanced,  
 The damsel's headlong error thro' the  
 wood—  
 Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-  
 loops—  
 His blue shield-lions cover'd—softly drew  
 Behind the twain, and when he saw the  
 star  
 Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him,  
 cried,  
 'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my  
 friend.'  
 And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry;  
 But when they closed—in a moment—at  
 one touch  
 Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the  
 world—  
 Went sliding down so easily, and fell,  
 That when he found the grass within his  
 hands  
 He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon  
 Lynette:  
 Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and over-  
 thrown,  
 And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,  
 Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast in  
 vain?'  
 'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son  
 Of old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent,  
 And victor of the bridges and the ford,  
 And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by  
 whom  
 I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness—

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Device and sorcery and unhappiness—  
Out, sword; we are thrown!' And Lancelot  
answer'd, 'Prince,  
O Gareth—thro' the mere unhappiness  
Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,  
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole,  
As on the day when Arthur knighted him.'

Then Gareth, 'Thou—Lancelot!—~~thine~~  
the hand  
That threw me? An some chance to mar  
the boast  
Thy brethren of thee make—which could  
not chance—  
Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,  
Shamed had I been, and sad—O Lancelot  
—thou!'

Whereat the maiden, petulant, 'Lance-  
lot,  
Why came ye not, when call'd? and where-  
fore now  
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my knave,  
Who being still rebuked, would answer  
still  
Courteous as any knight—but now, if  
knight,  
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and  
trick'd,  
And only wondering wherefore play'd  
upon:  
And doubtful whether I and mine be  
scorn'd.  
Where should be truth if not in Arthur's  
hall,  
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave,  
prince and fool,  
I hate thee and for ever.'

And Lancelot said,  
'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight art  
thou  
To the King's best wish. O damsel, be you  
wise  
To call him shamed, who is but over-  
thrown?  
Thrown have I been, nor once, but many  
a time.  
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,  
And overthrower from being overthrown.  
With sword we have not striven; and thy  
good horse

And thou are weary; yet not less I felt  
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of  
thine.  
Well hast thou done; for all the stream is  
freed,  
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his  
foes,  
And when reviled, hast answer'd graciously,  
And makest merry when overthrown.  
Prince, Knight,  
Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our Table  
Round!'

And then when turning to Lynette he  
told  
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said,  
'Ay well—ay well—for worse than being  
fool'd  
Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,  
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and  
drinks  
And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.  
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.  
Seek, till we find.' And when they sought  
and found,  
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life  
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden  
gazed.  
'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to sleep  
hast thou.  
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to him  
As any mother? Ay, but such a one  
As all day long hath rated at her child,  
And vexed his day, but blesses him asleep—  
Good lord, how sweetly smells the honey-  
suckle  
In the hush'd night, as if the world were  
one  
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!  
O Lancelot, Lancelot'—and she clapt her  
hands—  
'Full merry am I to find my goodly knave  
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn have I,  
Else yon black felon had not let me pass,  
To bring thee back to do the battle with  
him.  
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;  
Who doubts thee victor? so will my knight-  
knave  
Miss the full flower of this accomplish-  
ment.'

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

Said Lancelot, 'Peradventure he, you  
name,  
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he  
will,  
Change his for mine, and take my charger,  
fresh,  
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well  
As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-like,' she  
said,  
'Courtous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in all.'

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd  
the shield;  
'Ramp ye lance-splintering lions, on whom  
all spears  
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!  
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your  
lord!—  
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for  
you.  
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these  
Streams virtue—fire—thro' one that will  
not shame  
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.  
Hence: let us go.'

Silent the silent field

They traversed. Arthur's harp tho'  
summer-wan,  
In counter motion to the clouds, allured  
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his  
liege.  
A star shot: 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the foe  
falls!'  
An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor pealing  
there!'  
Suddenly she that rode upon his left  
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him,  
crying,  
'Yield, yield him this again: 'tis he must  
fight:  
I curse the tongue that all thro yesterday  
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lancelot  
now  
To lend thee horse and shield: wonders ye  
have done;  
Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow  
In having flung the three: I see thee  
maim'd,  
Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling the  
fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me all ye  
know.

You cannot scare me; nor rough face, or  
voice,

Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery  
Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, Prince,' she cried,  
'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,  
Seeing he never rides abroad by day;  
But watch'd him have I like a phantom  
pass  
Chilling the night: nor have I heard the  
voice.

Always he made his mouthpiece of a page  
Who came and went, and still reported him  
As closing in himself the strength of ten,  
And when his anger tare him, massacring  
Man, woman, lad and girl—yea, the soft  
babe!

Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant  
flesh,  
Monster! O Prince, I went for Lancelot  
first,  
The quest is Lancelot's: give him back the  
shield.'

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight for  
this,  
Belike he wins it as the better man:  
Thus—and not else!'

But Lancelot on him urged  
All the devisings of their chivalry  
When one might meet a mightier than  
himself;  
How best to manage horse, lance, sword  
and shield,  
And so fill up the gap where force might  
fail  
With skill and fineness. Instant were his  
words.

Then Gareth, 'Here be rules. I know  
but one—  
To dash against mine enemy and to win.  
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the joust,  
And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help thee,'  
sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that  
grew

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they  
rode

In converse till she made her palfrey halt,  
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd  
'There.'

And all the three were silent seeing, pitch'd  
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,  
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak  
Sunder the glooming crimson on the  
marge,

Black, with black banner, and a long black  
horn

Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth graspt,  
And so, before the two could hinder him,  
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the  
horn.

Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon  
Came lights and lights, and once again he  
blew;

Whereon were hollow tramplings up and  
down

And muffled voices heard, and shadows  
past;

Till high above him, circled with her maids,  
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,  
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him  
White hands, and courtesy; but when the  
Prince

'Three times had blown—after long hush—  
at last—

The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,  
Thro' those black foldings, that which  
housed therein.

High on a nightblack horse, in nightblack  
arms,

With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of  
Death,

And crown'd with fleshless laughter—  
some ten steps—

In the half-light—thro' the dim dawn—  
advanced

The monster, and then paused, and spake  
no word.

But Gareth spake and all indignantly,  
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength  
of ten,

Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God  
hath given,

But must, to make the terror of thee more,  
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries

Of that which Life hath done with, and the  
clod,

Less dull than thou, will hide with mantling  
flowers

As if for pity?' But he spake no word;  
Which set the horror higher: a maiden  
swoon'd;

The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and  
wept,

As doom'd to be the bride of Night and  
Death;

Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his  
helm;

And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm  
blood felt

Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were  
aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely  
neigh'd,

And Death's dark war-horse bounded for-  
ward with him.

Then those that did not blink the terror,  
saw

That Death was cast to ground, and slowly  
rose.

But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the  
skull.

Half fell to right and half to left and lay.  
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the  
helm

As throughly as the skull; and out from  
this

Issued the bright face of a blooming boy  
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying,

'Knight,  
Slay me not: my three brethren bad me  
do it,

To make a horror all about the house,  
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.

'They never dream'd the passes would be  
past.'

Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one  
Not many a moon his younger, 'My fair  
child,

What madness made thee challenge the  
chief knight

Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they bad me  
do it.

They hate the King, and Lancelot, the  
King's friend,

## GARETH AND LYNETTE

They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream,  
They never dream'd the passes could be past.'

Then sprang the happier day from underground;  
And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance  
And revel and song, made merry over Death,  
As being after all their foolish fears  
And horrors only proven a blooming boy.  
So large mirth lived and Gareth won the quest.

And he that told the tale in older times  
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,  
But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

### THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,  
A tributary prince of Devon, one  
Of that great Order of the Table Round,  
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,  
And loved her, as he loved the light of Heaven.  
And as the light of Heaven varies, now  
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night  
With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint  
To make her beauty vary day by day,  
In crimsons and in purples and in gems.  
And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,  
Who first had found and loved her in a state  
Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him  
In some fresh splendour; and the Queen herself,  
Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,  
Loved her, and often with her own white hands  
Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,  
Next after her own self, in all the court.  
And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart  
Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
And loveliest of all women upon earth.  
And seeing them so tender and so close,

Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.

But when a rumour rose about the Queen,  
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,  
Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard

The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,

Not less Geraint believed it; and there fell  
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,  
Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint  
In nature: wherefore going to the King,  
He made this pretext, that his principedom lay

Close on the borders of a territory,  
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff knights,

Assassins, and all flyers from the hand  
Of justice, and whatever loathes a law:  
And therefore, till the King himself should please

To cleanse this common sewer of all his realm,

He craved a fair permission to depart,  
And there defend his marches; and the King

Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,  
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them, to the shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own land;

Where, thinking, that if ever yet was wife  
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,  
He compass'd her with sweet observances  
And worship, never leaving her, and grew  
Forgetful of his promise to the King,  
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,  
Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
Forgetful of his principedom and its cares.  
And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.  
And by and by the people, when they met  
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,  
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him  
As of a prince whose manhood was all gone,  
And molten down in mere uxoriousness.  
And this she gather'd from the people's eyes:

This too the women who attired her head,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

To please her, dwelling on his boundless  
love,  
Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the  
more:

And day by day she thought to tell Geraint,  
But could not out of bashful delicacy;  
While he that watch'd her sadden, was the  
more  
Suspicious that her nature had a taint. ➤

At last, it chanced that on a summer  
morn  
(They sleeping each by either) the new sun  
Beat thro' the blindless casement of the  
room,  
And heated the strong warrior in his  
dreams;  
Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,  
And bared the knotted column of his  
throat,  
The massive square of his heroic breast,  
And arms on which the standing muscle  
sloped,  
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,  
Running too vehemently to break upon it.  
And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,  
Admiring him, and thought within herself,  
Was ever man so grandly made as he?  
Then, like a shadow, past the people's  
talk  
And accusation of uxoriousness  
Across her mind, and bowing over him,  
Low to her own heart piteously she said:

'O noble breast and all-puissant arms,  
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men  
Reproach you, saying all your force is  
gone?

I *am* the cause, because I dare not speak  
And tell him what I think and what they  
say.

And yet I hate that he should linger here;  
I cannot love my lord and not his name.  
Far liefer had I gird his harness on him,  
And ride with him to battle and stand by,  
And watch his mighty hand striking great  
blows

At catiffs and at wrongers of the world.  
Far better were I laid in the dark earth,  
Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,

And darken'd from the high light in his  
eyes,  
Than that my lord thro' me should suffer  
shame.

Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,  
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,  
Or maybe pierced to death before mine  
eyes,

And yet not dare to tell him what I think,  
And how men slur him, saying all his force  
Is melted into mere effeminacy?  
O me, I fear that I am no true wife.'

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,  
And the strong passion in her made her  
weep

True tears upon his broad and naked  
breast,  
And these awoke him, and by great mis-  
chance

He heard but fragments of her later words,  
And that she fear'd she was not a true wife.  
And then he thought, 'In spite of all my  
care,

For all my pains, poor man, for all my  
pains,

She is not faithful to me, and I see her  
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's  
hall.'

Then tho' he loved and revered her too  
much

To dream she could be guilty of foul act,  
Right thro' his manful breast darted the  
pang

That makes a man, in the sweet face of her  
Whom he loves most, lonely and miserable.  
At this he hur'd his huge limbs out of bed,  
And shook his drowsy squire awake and  
cried,

'My charger and her palfrey;' then to her,  
'I will ride forth into the wilderness;  
For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to win,  
I have not fall'n so low as some would wish.  
And thou, put on thy worst and meanest  
dress

And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd,  
amazed,

'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault.'  
But he, 'I charge thee, ask not, but obey.'  
Then she bethought her of a faded silk,  
A faded mantle and a faded veil,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,  
Wherein she kept them folded reverently  
With sprigs of summer laid between the  
folds,  
She took them, and array'd herself therein,  
Remembering when first he came on her  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her  
in it,  
And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey to her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the  
court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before  
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.  
There on a day, he sitting high in hall,  
Before him came a forester of Dean,  
Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart  
Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,  
First seen that day: these things he told the  
King.  
Then the good King gave order to let blow  
His horns for hunting on the morrow morn.  
And when the Queen petition'd for his  
leave  
To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.  
So with the morning all the court were  
gone.  
But Guinevere lay late into the morn,  
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her  
love  
For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt;  
But rose at last, a single maiden with her,  
Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd  
the wood;  
There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd  
Waiting to hear the hounds; but heard  
instead  
A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince  
Geraint,  
Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress  
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,  
Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow  
ford  
Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.  
A purple scarf, at either end whereof  
There swung an apple of the purest gold,  
Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up  
To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly  
In summer suit and silks of holiday.  
Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she

Sweetly and stately, and with all grace  
Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd  
him:  
'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said, 'later  
than we!'  
'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd, 'and so  
late  
That I but come like you to see the hunt,  
Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with me,' she  
said;  
'For on this little knoll, if anywhere,  
There is good chance that we shall hear the  
hounds:  
Here often they break covert at our feet.'

And while they listen'd for the distant  
hunt,  
And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,  
King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth,  
there rode  
Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf;  
Whereof the dwarf lag'd latest, and the  
knight  
Had vizzor up, and show'd a youthful face,  
Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.  
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face  
In the King's hall, desired his name, and  
sent  
Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf;  
Who being vicious, old and irritable,  
And doubling all his master's vice of pride,  
Made answer sharply that she should not  
know.  
'Then will I ask it of himself,' she said.  
'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,' cried  
the dwarf;  
'Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him;'  
And when she put her horse toward the  
knight,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she  
return'd  
Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint  
Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn the name,'  
Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of  
him,  
Who answer'd as before; and when the  
Prince  
Had put his horse in motion toward the  
knight,  
Struck at him with his whip, and cut his  
cheek.

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,  
Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive hand  
Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:  
But he, from his exceeding manfulness  
And pure nobility of temperament,  
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm,  
refrain'd  
From ev'n a word, and so returning said:

'I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,  
Done in your maiden's person to yourself:  
And I will track this vermin to their  
earths:  
For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt  
To find, at some place I shall come at, arms  
On loan, or else for pledge; and, being  
found,  
Then will I fight him, and will break his  
pride  
And on the third day will again be here,  
So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell.'

'Farewell, fair Prince,' answer'd the  
stately Queen.  
'Be prosperous in this journey, as in all;  
And may you light on all things that you  
love,  
And live to wed with her whom first you  
love:  
But ere you wed with any, bring your  
bride,  
And I, were she the daughter of a king,  
Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the hedge,  
Will clothe her for her bridals like the sun.'

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that  
he heard  
The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,  
A little vex'd at losing of the hunt,  
A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy  
glade  
And valley, with fixt eye following the  
three.  
At last they issued from the world of wood,  
And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,  
And show'd themselves against the sky,  
and sank.  
And thither came Geraint, and underneath  
Beheld the long street of a little town  
In a long valley, on one side whereof,

White from the mason's hand, a fortress  
rose;  
And on one side a castle in decay,  
Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry ravine:  
And out of town and valley came a noise  
As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
Brawling, or like a clamour of the rooks  
At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the  
three,  
And enter'd, and were lost behind the  
walls.  
'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd him  
to his earth.'  
And down the long street riding wearily,  
Found every hostel full, and everywhere  
Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss  
And bustling whistle of the youth who  
scour'd  
His master's armour; and of such a one  
He ask'd, 'What means the tumult in the  
town?'  
Who told him, scouring still, 'The sparrow-  
hawk!'  
Then riding close behind an ancient churl,  
Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,  
Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,  
Ask'd yet once more what meant the hub-  
bub here?  
Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh! the sparrow-  
hawk.'  
Then riding further past an armourer's,  
Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above  
his work,  
Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,  
He put the self-same query, but the man  
Not turning round, nor looking at him,  
said:  
'Friend, he that labours for the sparrow-  
hawk  
Has little time for idle questioners.'  
Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden  
spleen:  
'A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-  
hawk!  
Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck  
him dead!  
Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg  
The murmur of the world! What is it  
to me?



## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,  
Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-  
hawks!

Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-mad,  
Where can I get me harbourage for the  
night?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy?  
Speak!

Whereat the armourer turning all amazed  
And seeing one so gay in purple silks,  
Came forward with the helmet yet in hand  
And answer'd, 'Pardon me, O stranger  
knight;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,  
And there is scanty time for half the work.  
Arms? truth! I know not: all are wanted  
here.

Harbourage? truth, good truth, I know  
not, save,

It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge  
Yonder.' He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,  
Across the bridge that spann'd the dry  
ravine.

There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl,  
(His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,  
Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and said:  
'Whither, fair son?' to whom Geraint  
replied,

'O friend, I seek a harbourage for the  
night.'

Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and partake  
The slender entertainment of a house  
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-  
door'd.'

'Thanks, venerable friend,' replied Geraint;  
'So that ye do not serve me sparrow-hawks  
For supper, I will enter, I will eat  
With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast.'  
Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed  
Earl,

And answer'd, 'Graver cause than yours is  
mine

To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-  
hawk:

But in, go in; for save yourself desire it,  
We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest.'

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,  
His charger trampling many a prickly star

Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.  
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.  
Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed  
with fern;

And here had fall'n a great part of a tower,  
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the  
cliff,

And like a crag was gay with wilding  
flowers:

And high above a piece of turret stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were silent,  
wound

Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems  
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred  
arms,

And suck'd the joining of the stones, and  
look'd

A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,  
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang  
Clear thro' the open casement of the hall,  
Singing; and as the sweet voice of a bird,  
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is  
That sings so delicately clear, and make  
Conjecture of the plumage and the form;  
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint;  
And made him like a man abroad at morn  
When first the liquid note beloved of men  
Comes flying over many a windy wave  
To Britain, and in April suddenly  
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green  
and red,

And he suspends his converse with a friend,  
Or it may be the labour of his hands,  
To think or say, 'There is the nightingale;'  
So fared it with Geraint, who thought and  
said,  
'Here, by God's grace, is the one voice  
for me.'

It chanced the song that Enid sang was  
one

Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang:

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and  
lower the proud;

'Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm,  
and cloud;

Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with  
smile or frown;  
With that wild wheel we go not up or  
down;  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

'Smile and we smile, the lords of many  
lands;  
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own  
hands;  
For man is man and master of his fate.

'Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring  
crowd;  
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the  
cloud;  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor  
hate.'

'Hark, by the bird's song ye may learn  
the nest,'  
Said Yniol; 'enter quickly.' Entering then,  
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones,  
The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd hall,  
He found an ancient dame in dim brocade;  
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-  
white,  
That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,  
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,  
Her daughter. In a moment thought  
Geraint,  
'Here by God's rood is the one maid for me.'  
But none spake word except the hoary  
Earl:  
'Enid, the good knight's horse stands in  
the court;  
Take him to stall, and give him corn, and  
then  
Go to the town and buy us flesh and wine;  
And we will make us merry as we may.  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are  
great.'

He spake: the Prince, as Enid past him,  
fain  
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught  
His purple scarf, and held, and said, 'For-  
bear!  
Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O my son,  
Endures not that her guest should serve  
himself.'

And reverencing the custom of the house  
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall;  
And after went her way across the bridge,  
And reach'd the town, and while the  
Prince and Earl  
Yet spoke together, came again with one,  
A youth, that following with a costrel bore  
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and  
wine.

And Enid brought sweet cakes to make  
them cheer,  
And in her veil enfolded, manchet bread.  
And then, because their hall must also  
serve  
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread  
the board,  
And stood behind, and waited on the three.  
And seeing her so sweet and serviceable,  
Geraint had longing in him evermore  
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb,  
That crost the trencher as she laid it down:  
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
For now the wine made summer in his  
veins,  
Let his eye rove in following, or rest  
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,  
Now here, now there, about the dusky  
hall;

Then suddenly address the hoary Earl:

'Fair Host and Earl, I pray your  
courtesy;  
This sparrow-hawk, what is he? tell me of  
him.  
His name? but no, good faith, I will not  
have it:  
For if he be the knight whom late I saw  
Ride into that new fortress by your town,  
White from the mason's hand, then have I  
sworn  
From his own lips to have it—I am Geraint  
Of Devon—for this morning when the  
Queen  
Sent her own maiden to demand the name,  
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she  
return'd

Indignant to the Queen; and then I swore  
That I would track this caitiff to his hold,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

And fight and break his pride, and have it  
of him.  
And all unarm'd I rode, and thought to  
find  
Arms in your town, where all the men are  
mad;  
They take the rustic murmur of their bourg  
For the great wave that echoes round the  
world;  
They would not hear me speak: but if ye  
know  
Where I can light on arms, or if yourself  
Should have them, tell me, seeing I have  
sworn  
That I will break his pride and learn his  
name,  
Avenging this great insult done the Queen.'

Then cried Earl Yniol, 'Art thou he  
indeed,  
Geraint, a name far-sounded among men  
For noble deeds? and truly I, when first  
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,  
Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by your  
state  
And presence might have guess'd you one  
of those  
That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.  
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery;  
For this dear child hath often heard me  
praise  
Your feats of arms, and often when I  
paused  
Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to hear;  
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds  
To noble hearts who see but acts of wrong:  
O never yet had woman such a pair  
Of suitors as this maiden; first Limours,  
A creature wholly given to brawls and wine,  
Drunk even when he woo'd; and be he  
dead  
I know not, but he past to the wild land.  
The second was your foe, the sparrow-  
hawk,  
My curse, my nephew—I will not let his  
name  
Slip from my lips if I can help it—he,  
When I that knew him fierce and turbulent  
Refused her to him, then his pride awoke;  
And since the proud man often is the mean,  
He sow'd a slander in the common ear,

Affirming that his father left him gold,  
And in my charge, which was not ren-  
der'd to him;  
Bribed with large promises the men who  
served  
About my person, the more easily  
Because my means were somewhat broken  
into  
Thro' open doors and hospitality;  
Raised my own town against me in the  
night  
Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my  
house;  
From mine own earldom foully ousted me;  
Built that new fort to overawe my friends,  
For truly there are those who love me yet;  
And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,  
Where doubtless he would put me soon to  
death,  
But that his pride too much despises me:  
And I myself sometimes despise myself;  
For I have let men be, and have their way;  
Am much too gentle, have not used my  
power:  
Nor know I whether I be very base  
Or very manful, whether very wise  
Or very foolish; only this I know,  
That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,  
But can endure it all most patiently.'

'Well said, true heart,' replied Geraint,  
'but arms,  
That if the sparrow-hawk, this nephew,  
fight  
In next day's tourney I may break his pride.'

And Yniol answer'd, 'Arms, indeed, but  
old  
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,  
Are mine, and therefore at thine asking,  
thine.  
But in this tournament can no man tilt,  
Except the lady he loves best be there.  
Two forks are fixt into the meadow ground,  
And over these is placed a silver wand,  
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,  
The prize of beauty for the fairest there.  
And this, what knight soever be in field  
Lays claim to for the lady at his side,  
And tilts with my good nephew thereupon,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Who being apt at arms and big of bone  
Has ever won it for the lady with him,  
And topping over all antagonism  
Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow-  
hawk.  
But thou, that hast no lady, canst not fight.'

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright  
replied,  
Leaning a little toward him, 'Thy leave!  
Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
For this dear child, because I never saw,  
Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,  
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.  
And if I fall her name will yet remain  
Untarnish'd as before; but if I live,  
So aid me Heaven when at mine utter-  
most,  
As I will make her truly my true wife.'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart  
Danced in his bosom, seeing better days.  
And looking round he saw not Enid there,  
(Who hearing her own name had stol'n  
away)  
But that old dame, to whom full tenderly  
And fondling all her hand in his he said,  
'Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,  
And best by her that bore her understood.  
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest  
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the  
Prince.'

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl, and  
she  
With frequent smile and nod departing  
found,  
Half disarray'd as to her rest, the girl;  
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek, and  
then  
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,  
And kept her off and gazed upon her face,  
And told her all their converse in the hall,  
Proving her heart: but never light and  
shade  
Cours'd one another more on open ground  
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and  
pale  
Across the face of Enid hearing her;  
While slowly falling as a scale that falls,  
When weight is added only grain by grain,

Sank her sweet head upon her gentle  
breast;  
Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,  
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it;  
So moving without answer to her rest  
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw  
The quiet night into her blood, but lay  
Contemplating her own unworthiness;  
And when the pale and bloodless east  
began  
To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised  
Her mother too, and hand in hand they  
moved  
Down to the meadow where the jousts were  
held,  
And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when  
Geraint  
Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,  
He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,  
Himself beyond the rest pushing could  
move  
The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms  
Were on his princely person, but thro'  
these  
Princelike his bearing shone; and errant  
knights  
And ladies came, and by and by the town  
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the lists.  
And there they fixt the forks into the  
ground,  
And over these they placed the silver wand,  
And over that the golden sparrow-hawk.  
Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,  
Spake to the lady with him and pro-  
claim'd,  
'Advance and take, as fairest of the fair,  
What I these two years past have won for  
thee,  
The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake the  
Prince,  
'Forbear: there is a worthier,' and the  
knight  
With some surprise and thrice as much  
disdain  
Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his  
face  
Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule,  
So burnt he was with passion, crying out,  
'Do battle for it then,' no more; and thrice

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

They clash'd together, and thrice they  
 brake their spears.  
 Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd  
 at each  
 So often and with such blows, that all the  
 crowd  
 Wonder'd, and now and then from distant  
 walls  
 There came a clapping as of phantom hands.  
 So twice they fought, and twice they  
 breathed, and still  
 The dew of their great labour, and the  
 blood  
 Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd  
 their force.  
 But either's force was match'd till Yniol's  
 cry,  
 'Remember that great insult done the  
 Queen,'  
 Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade  
 aloft,  
 And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the  
 bone,  
 And fell'd him, and set foot upon his breast,  
 And said, 'Thy name?' 'To whom the  
 fallen man  
 Made answer, groaning, 'Edyrn, son of  
 Nudd!  
 Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.  
 My pride is broken: men have seen my  
 fall.'  
 'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied  
 Geraint,  
 'These two things shalt thou do, or else  
 thou diest.  
 First, thou thyself, with damsel and with  
 dwarf,  
 Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and coming  
 there,  
 Crave pardon for that insult done the  
 Queen,  
 And shalt abide her judgment on it; next,  
 Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy  
 kin.  
 These two things shalt thou do, or thou  
 shalt die.'  
 And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things will  
 I do,  
 For I have never yet been overthrown,  
 And thou hast overthrown me, and my  
 pride

Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall!  
 And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,  
 And there the Queen forgave him easily.  
 And being young, he changed and came to  
 loathe  
 His crime of traitor, slowly drew himself  
 Bright from his old dark life, and fell at last  
 In the great battle fighting for the King.

But when the third day from the hunting-  
 morn  
 Made a low splendour in the world, and  
 wings  
 Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay  
 With her fair head in the dim-yellow light,  
 Among the dancing shadows of the birds,  
 Woke and bethought her of her promise  
 given  
 No later than last eve to Prince Geraint—  
 So bent he seem'd on going the third day,  
 He would not leave her, till her promise  
 given—  
 To ride with him this morning to the court,  
 And there be made known to the stately  
 Queen,  
 And there be wedded with all ceremony.  
 At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,  
 And thought it never yet had look'd so  
 mean.  
 For as a leaf in mid-November is  
 To what it was in mid-October, seem'd  
 The dress that now she look'd on to the  
 dress  
 She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.  
 And still she look'd, and still the terror  
 grew  
 Of that strange bright and dreadful thing,  
 a court,  
 All staring at her in her faded silk:  
 And softly to her own sweet heart she said:  
 'This noble prince who won our earldom  
 back,  
 So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
 Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit  
 him!  
 Would he could tarry with us here awhile  
 But being so beholden to the Prince,  
 It were but little grace in any of us,  
 Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,  
 To seek a second favour at his hands.

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
Myself would work eye dim, and finger  
lame,  
Far liefer than so much discredit him.'

And Enid fell in longing for a dress  
All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a  
costly gift

Of her good mother, given her on the night  
Before her birthday, three sad years ago,  
That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd their  
house,

And scatter'd all they had to all the winds:  
For while the mother show'd it, and the  
two

Were turning and admiring it, the work  
To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
That Edyrn's men were on them, and they  
fled

With little save the jewels they had on,  
Which being sold and sold had bought  
them bread:

And Edyrn's men had caught them in their  
flight,

And placed them in this ruin; and she  
wish'd

The Prince had found her in her ancient  
home;

Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
And roam the goodly places that she knew;  
And last bethought her how she used to  
watch,

Near that old home, a pool of golden carp;  
And one was patch'd and blurr'd and  
lustreless

Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool;  
And half asleep she made comparison  
Of that and these to her own faded self  
And the gay court, and fell asleep again;  
And dreamt herself was such a faded form  
Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool;  
But this was in the garden of a king;  
And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she knew  
That all was bright; that all about were  
birds

Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work;  
That all the turf was rich in plots that  
look'd

Each like a garnet or a turkis in it;  
And lords and ladies of the high court went  
In silver tissue talking things of state;

And children of the King in cloth of gold  
Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down  
the walks;

And while she thought 'They will not see  
me,' came

A stately queen whose name was  
Guinevere,

And all the children in their cloth of gold  
Ran to her, crying, 'If we have fish at all  
Let them be gold; and charge the garden-  
ers now

To pick the faded creature from the pool,  
And cast it on the mixen that it die.'

And therewithal one came and seized on  
her,

And Enid started waking, with her heart  
All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,  
And lo! it was her mother grasping her  
To get her well awake; and in her hand  
A suit of bright apparel, which she laid  
Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly:

'See here, my child, how fresh the  
colours look,

How fast they hold like colours of a shell  
That keeps the wear and polish of the  
wave.

Why not? It never yet was worn, I trow:  
Look on it, child, and tell me if ye know it.'

And Enid look'd, but all confused at first,  
Could scarce divide it from her foolish  
dream:

Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,  
And answer'd, 'Yea, I know it; your good  
gift,

So sadly lost on that unhappy night;  
Your own good gift!' 'Yea, surely,' said  
the dame,

'And gladly given again this happy morn.  
For when the jousts were ended yesterday,  
Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-  
where

He found the sack and plunder of our  
house

All scatter'd thro' the houses of the town;  
And gave command that all which once  
was ours

Should now be ours again: and yester-eve,  
While ye were talking sweetly with your  
Prince,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Came one with this and laid it in my hand,  
 For love or fear, or seeking favour of us,  
 Because we have our earldom back again.  
 And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,  
 But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.  
 Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise?  
 For I myself unwillingly have worn  
 My faded suit, as you, my child, have  
 yours,  
 And howsoever patient, Yniol his.  
 Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,  
 With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,  
 And page, and maid, and squire, and  
 seneschal,  
 And pastime both of hawk and hound, and  
 all  
 That appertains to noble maintenance.  
 Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house;  
 But since our fortune swerved from sun to  
 shade,  
 And all thro' that young traitor, cruel need  
 Constrain'd us, but a better time has  
 come;  
 So clothe yourself in this, that better fits  
 Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride:  
 For tho' ye won the prize of fairest fair,  
 And tho' I heard him call you fairest fair,  
 Let never maiden think, however fair,  
 She is not fairer in new clothes than old.  
 And should some great court-lady say, the  
 Prince  
 Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the hedge,  
 And like a madman brought her to the  
 court,  
 Then were ye shamed, and, worse, might  
 shame the Prince  
 To whom we are beholden; but I know,  
 When my dear child is set forth at her best,  
 That neither court nor country, tho' they  
 sought  
 Thro' all the provinces like those of old  
 That lighted on Queen Esther, has her  
 match.'

Here ceased the kindly mother out of  
 breath;  
 And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay;  
 Then, as the white and glittering star of  
 morn  
 Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by  
 Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,

And left her maiden couch, and robed her-  
 self,  
 Help'd by the mother's careful hand and  
 eye,  
 Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown;  
 Who, after, turn'd her daughter round, and  
 said,  
 She never yet had seen her half so fair;  
 And call'd her like that maiden in the tale,  
 Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of  
 flowers,  
 And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,  
 Flur, for whose love the Roman Caesar  
 first  
 Invaded Britain, 'But we beat him back,  
 As this great Prince invaded us, and we,  
 Not beat him back, but welcomed him  
 with joy.  
 And I can scarcely ride with you to court,  
 For old am I, and rough the ways and wild;  
 But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream  
 I see my princess as I see her now,  
 Clothed with my gift, and gay among the  
 gay.'

But while the women thus rejoiced,  
 Geraint  
 Woke where he slept in the high hall, and  
 call'd  
 For Enid, and when Yniol made report  
 Of that good mother making Enid gay  
 In such apparel as might well beseem  
 His princess, or indeed the stately Queen,  
 He answer'd: 'Earl, entreat her by my love,  
 Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
 That she ride with me in her faded silk.'  
 Yniol with that hard message went; it fell  
 Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn:  
 For Enid, all abash'd she knew not why,  
 Dared not to glance at her good mother's  
 face,  
 But silently, in all obedience,  
 Her mother silent too, nor helping her,  
 Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd  
 gift,  
 And robed them in her ancient suit again,  
 And so descended. Never man rejoiced  
 More than Geraint to greet her thus  
 attired;  
 And glancing all at once as keenly at her  
 As careful robins eye the delver's toil,

## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall,  
But rested with her sweet face satisfied;  
Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow,  
Her by both hands he caught, and sweetly  
said,

'O my new mother, be not wroth or  
grieved  
At thy new son, for my petition to her. ➤  
When late I left Caerleon, our great Queen,  
In words whose echo lasts, they were so  
sweet,  
Made promise, that whatever bride I  
brought,  
Herself would clothe her like the sun in  
Heaven.

Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd hall,  
Beholding one so bright in dark estate,  
I vow'd that could I gain her, our fair  
Queen,  
No hand but hers, should make your Enid  
burst

Sunlike from cloud—and likewise thought  
perhaps,  
That service done so graciously would bind  
The two together; fain I would the two  
Should love each other: how can Enid find  
A nobler friend? Another thought was  
mine;

I came among you here so suddenly,  
That tho' her gentle presence at the lists  
Might well have served for proof that I  
was loved,

I doubted whether daughter's tenderness,  
Or easy nature, might not let itself  
Be moulded by your wishes for her weal;  
Or whether some false sense in her own self  
Of my contrasting brightness, overbore  
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall;  
And such a sense might make her long for  
court

And all its perilous glories: and I thought,  
That could I somehow prove such force in  
her

Link'd with such love for me, that at a  
word

(No reason given her) she could cast aside  
A splendour dear to women, new to her,  
And therefore dearer; or if not so new,  
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power  
Of intermitted usage; then I felt

That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows,  
Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I do rest,  
A prophet certain of my prophecy,  
That never shadow of mistrust can cross  
Between us. Grant me pardon for my  
thoughts:

And for my strange petition I will make  
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,  
When your fair child shall wear your costly  
gift  
Beside your own warm hearth, with, on her  
knees,  
Who knows? another gift of the high God,  
Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp you  
thanks.'

He spoke: the mother smiled, but half in  
tears,  
Then brought a mantle down and wrapt  
her in it,  
And claspt and kiss'd her, and they rode  
away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had  
climb'd  
The giant tower, from whose high crest,  
they say,  
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the yellow sea;  
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea  
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale of  
Usk,  
By the flat meadow, till she saw them  
come;  
And then descending met them at the  
gates,  
Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,  
And did her honour as the Prince's bride,  
And clothed her for her bridals like the  
sun;  
And all that week was old Caerleon gay.  
For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,  
They twain were wedded with all cere-  
mony.

And this was on the last year's Whitsun-  
tide.  
But Enid ever kept the faded silk,  
Remembering how first he came on her,  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her  
in it,



## THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey toward her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the  
court.

And now this morning when he said to  
her,  
'Put on your worst and meanest dress,' she  
found  
And took it, and array'd herself therein.

### GERAINT AND ENID

O PURBLIND race of miserable men,  
How many among us at this very hour  
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,  
By taking true for false, or false for true;  
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world  
Groping, how many, until we pass and  
reach  
That other, where we see as we are seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing  
forth  
That morning, when they both had got to  
horse,  
Perhaps because he loved her passionately,  
And felt that tempest brooding round his  
heart,  
Which, if he spoke at all, would break  
perforce  
Upon a head so dear in thunder, said:  
'Not at my side. I charge thee ride before,  
Ever a good way on before; and this  
I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,  
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
No, not a word!' and Enid was aghast;  
And forth they rode, but scarce three  
paces on,  
When crying out, 'Effeminate as I am,  
I will not fight my way with gilded arms,  
All shall be iron;' he loosed a mighty  
purse,  
Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the  
squire.

So the last sight that Enid had of home  
Was all the marble threshold flashing,  
strown  
With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the  
squire  
Chafing his shoulder: then he cried again,

'To the wilds!' and Enid leading down the  
tracks  
Thro' which he bad her lead him on, they  
past

The marches, and by bandit-haunted  
holds,  
Gray swamps and pools, waste places of  
the hern,  
And wildernesses, perilous paths, they  
rode:  
Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd  
soon:

A stranger meeting them had surely  
thought

They rode so slowly and they look'd so  
pale,  
That each had suffer'd some exceeding  
wrong.

For he was ever saying to himself,  
'O I that wasted time to tend upon her,  
To compass her with sweet observances,  
To dress her beautifully and keep her  
true'—

And there he broke the sentence in his  
heart

Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue  
May break it, when his passion masters him.  
And she was ever praying the sweet  
heavens

To save her dear lord whole from any  
wound.

And ever in her mind she cast about  
For that unnoticed failing in herself,  
Which made him look so cloudy and so  
cold;

Till the great plover's human whistle  
amazed

Her heart, and glancing round the waste  
she fear'd

In every wavering brake an ambuscade.  
Then thought again, 'If there be such  
in me,

I might amend it by the grace of Heaven,  
If he would only speak and tell me of it.'

But when the fourth part of the day was  
gone,

Then Enid was aware of three tall knights  
On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a rock  
in shadow, waiting for them, catiffs all;  
And heard one crying to his fellow, 'Look,

## GERAINT AND ENID

Here comes a laggard hanging down his head,  
Who seems no bolder than a beaten hound;  
Come, we will slay him and will have his horse  
And armour, and his damsel shall be ours.'

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart, and said:  
'I will go back a little to my lord,  
And I will tell him all their caitiff talk;  
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,  
Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,  
Than that my lord should suffer loss or shame.'

Then she went back some paces of return,  
Met his full frown timidly firm, and said;  
'My lord, I saw three bandits by the rock  
Waiting to fall on you, and heard them boast  
That they would slay you, and possess your horse  
And armour, and your damsel should be theirs.'

He made a wrathful answer: 'Did I wish  
Your warning or your silence? one command  
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,  
And thus ye keep it! Well then, look—for now,  
Whether ye wish me victory or defeat,  
Long for my life, or hunger for my death,  
Yourself shall see my vigour is not lost.'

Then Enid waited pale and sorrowful,  
And down upon him bare the bandit three.  
And at the midmost charging, Prince Geraint  
Drove the long spear a cubit thro' his breast  
And out beyond; and then against his brace  
Of comrades, each of whom had broken on him  
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,  
Swung from his brand a windy buffet out  
Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunn'd the twain  
Or slew them, and dismounting like a man  
That skins the wild beast after slaying him,

Stript from the three dead wolves of woman born  
The three gay suits of armour which they wore,  
And let the bodies lie, but bound the suits  
Of armour on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on  
Before you;' and she drove them thro' the waste.

He follow'd nearer: ruth began to work  
Against his anger in him, while he watch'd  
The being he loved best in all the world,  
With difficulty in mild obedience  
Driving them on: he fain had spoken to her,  
And loosed in words of sudden fire the wrath  
And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him all within;  
But evermore it seem'd an easier thing  
At once without remorse to strike her dead,  
'Than to cry 'Halt,' and to her own bright face  
Accuse her of the least immodesty:  
And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth the more  
That she *could* speak whom his own ear  
had heard  
Call herself false: and suffering thus he made  
Minutes an age: but in scarce longer time  
Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,  
Before he turn to fall seaward again,  
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold  
In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,  
Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks,  
Three other horsemen waiting, wholly arm'd,  
Whereof one seem'd far larger than her lord,  
And shook her pulses, crying, 'Look, a prize!  
Three horses and three goodly suits of arms,  
And all in charge of whom? a girl: set on.'  
'Nay,' said the second, 'yonder comes a knight.'  
The third, 'A craven; how he hangs his head.'

## GERAINT AND ENID

The giant answer'd merrily, 'Yea, but one?  
Wait here, and when he passes fall upon  
him.'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and said,  
'I will abide the coming of my lord,  
And I will tell him all their villainy.  
My lord is weary with the fight before,  
And they will fall upon him unawares.  
I needs must disobey him for his good;  
How should I dare obey him to his harm?  
Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me  
for it,  
I save a life dearer to me than mine.'

And she abode his coming, and said to  
him  
With timid firmness, 'Have I leave to speak?'  
He said, 'Ye take it, speaking,' and she  
spoke.

'There lurk three villains yonder in the  
wood,  
And each of them is wholly arm'd, and one  
Is larger-limb'd than you are, and they say  
That they will fall upon you while ye pass.'

To which he flung a wrathful answer  
back:  
'And if there were an hundred in the wood,  
And every man were larger-limb'd than I,  
And all at once should sally out upon me,  
I swear it would not ruffle me so much  
As you that not obey me. Stand aside,  
And if I fall, cleave to the better man.'

And Enid stood aside to wait the event,  
Not dare to watch the combat, only breathe  
Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a breath.  
And he, she dreaded most, bare down  
upon him.  
Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd; but  
Geraint's,  
A little in the late encounter strain'd,  
Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corselet  
home,  
And then brake short, and down his enemy  
roll'd,  
And there lay still; as he that tells the tale  
Saw once a great piece of a promontory,  
That had a sapling growing on it, slide

From the long shore-cliff's windy walls to  
the beach,  
And there lie still, and yet the sapling grew:  
So lay the man transfixt. His craven pair  
Of comrades making slower at the Prince,  
When now they saw their bulwark fallen,  
stood;  
On whom the victor, to confound them  
more,  
Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry; for as  
one,  
That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,  
All thro' the crash of the near cataract hears  
The drumming thunder of the huger fall  
At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear  
His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,  
And foemen scared, like that false pair who  
turn'd  
Flying, but, overtaken, died the death  
Themselves had wrought on many an  
innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting, pick'd  
the lance  
That pleased him best, and drew from  
those dead wolves  
Their three gay suits of armour, each from  
each,  
And bound them on their horses, each on  
each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on  
Before you,' and she drove them thro' the  
wood.

He follow'd nearer still: the pain she had  
To keep them in the wild ways of the wood,  
Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,  
Together, served a little to disedge  
The sharpness of that pain about her heart:  
And they themselves, like creatures gently  
born  
But into bad hands fall'n, and now so long  
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light  
ears, and felt  
Her low firm voice and tender government.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood  
they past,  
And issuing under open heavens beheld  
A little town with towers, upon a rock,

## GERAINT AND ENID

And close beneath, a meadow gemlike  
chased

In the brown wild, and mowers mowing  
in it:

And down a rocky pathway from the place  
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in his  
hand

Bare victual for the mowers: and Geraint  
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale:

Then, moving downward to the meadow  
ground,

He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by  
him, said,

'Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so faint.'

'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth; 'and  
thou,

My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,  
And only meet for mowers;' then set down  
His basket, and dismounting on the sward  
They let the horses graze, and ate them-  
selves.

And Enid took a little delicately,  
Less having stomach for it than desire  
To close with her lord's pleasure; but  
Geraint

Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,  
And when he found all empty, was amazed;  
And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten all, but  
take

A horse and arms for guerdon; choose the  
best.'

He, reddening in extremity of delight,  
'My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold.'

'Yc will be all the wealthier,' cried the  
Prince.

'I take it as free gift, then,' said the boy,  
'Not guerdon; for myself can easily,  
While your good damsel rests, return, and  
fetch

Fresh victual for these mowers of our Earl;

For these are his, and all the field is his,

And I myself am his; and I will tell him

How great a man thou art: he loves to know

When men of mark are in his territory:

And he will have thee to his palace here,

And serve thee costlier than with mowers'  
fare.'

Then said Geraint, 'I wish no better  
fare:

I never ate with angrier appetite

Than when I left your mowers dinnerless.  
And into no Earl's palace will I go.

I know, God knows, too much of palaces!

And if he want me, let him come to me.

But hire us some fair chamber for the  
night,

And stalling for the horses, and return

With victual for these men, and let us  
know.'

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the glad youth,  
and went,

Held his head high, and thought himself a  
knight,

And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,

Leading the horse, and they were left alone.

But when the Prince had brought his  
errant eyes

Home from the rock, sideways he let them  
glance

At Enid, where she droopt: his own false  
doom,

That shadow of mistrust should never cross  
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he  
sigh'd;

Then with another humorous ruth re-  
mark'd

The lusty mowers labouring dinnerless,  
And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning  
scythe,

And after nodded sleepily in the heat.

But she, remembering her old ruin'd hall,

And all the windy clamour of the daws

About her hollow turret, pluck'd the grass

There growing longest by the meadow's  
edge,

And into many a listless annulet,

Now over, now beneath her marriage  
ring,

Wove and unweave it, till the boy return'd

And told them of a chamber, and they  
went;

Where, after saying to her, 'If ye will,

Call for the woman of the house,' to which

She answer'd, 'Thanks, my lord;' the two  
remain'd

Apart by all the chamber's width, and mute

As creatures voiceless thro' the fault of  
birth,

Or two wild men supporters of a shield,

## GERAINT AND ENID

Painted, who stare at open space, nor  
glance  
The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along the  
street,  
And heel against the pavement echoing,  
burst  
Their drowse; and either started while the  
door,  
Push'd from without, drave backward to  
the wall,  
And midmost of a rout of roisterers,  
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,  
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,  
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,  
Limours.

He moving up with pliant courtliness,  
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,  
In the mid-warmth of welcome and graspt  
hand,

Found Enid with the corner of his eye,  
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.  
Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly  
cheer

To feed the sudden guest, and sump-  
tuously

According to his fashion, bad the host  
Call in what men soever were his friends,  
And feast with these in honour of their  
Earl;

'And care not for the cost; the cost is mine.'

And wine and food were brought, and  
Earl Limours

Drank till he jested with all ease, and told  
Free tales, and took the word and play'd  
upon it,

And made it of two colours; for his talk,  
When wine and free companions kindled  
him,

Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem  
Of fifty facets; thus he moved the Prince  
To laughter and his comrades to applause.  
Then, when the Prince was merry, ask'd  
Limours,

'Your leave, my lord, to cross the room,  
and speak

To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
And seems so lonely?' 'My free leave,' he  
said;

'Get her to speak: she doth not speak to  
me.'

Then rose Limours, and looking at his  
feet,

Like him who tries the bridge he fears may  
fail,

Croste and came near, lifted adoring eyes,  
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisperingly:

'Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,  
Enid, my early and my only love,  
Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd me  
wild—

What chance is this? how is it I see you  
here?

Ye are in my power at last, are in my  
power.

Yet fear me not: I call mine own self wild,  
But keep a touch of sweet civility  
Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.  
I thought, but that your father came be-  
tween,

In former days you saw me favourably.  
And if it were so do not keep it back:

Make me a little happier: let me know it:  
Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?

Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.  
And, Enid, you and he, I see with joy,

Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,  
You come with no attendance, page or maid,

To serve you—doth he love you as of old?  
For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know

Tho' men may bicker with the things they  
love,

They would not make them laughable in  
all eyes,

Not while they loved them; and your  
wretched dress,

A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks  
Your story, that this man loves you no  
more.

Your beauty is no beauty to him now:  
A common chance—right well I know it—  
pall'd—

For I know men: nor will ye win him back,  
For the man's love once gone never returns.

But here is one who loves you as of old;  
With more exceeding passion than of old:

Good, speak the word: my followers ring  
him round:

He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up;

## GERAINT AND ENID

They understand: nay; I do not mean blood:

Nor need ye look so scared at what I say:  
My malice is no deeper than a moat,  
No stronger than a wall: there is the keep;  
He shall not cross us more; speak but the word:

Or speak it not; but then by Him that made me

The one true lover whom you ever own'd,  
I will make use of all the power I have.

O pardon me! the madness of that hour,  
When first I parted from thee, moves me yet.'

At this the tender sound of his own voice

And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,  
Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd his eyes,

Moist as they were, wine-heated from the feast;

And answer'd with such craft as women use,

Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance  
That breaks upon them perilously, and said:

'Earl, if you love me as in former years,  
And do not practise on me, come with morn,

And snatch me from him as by violence;  
Leave me to-night: I am weary to the death.'

Low at leave-taking, with his brandish'd plume

Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-amorous Earl,

And the stout Prince bad him a loud good-night.

He moving homeward babbled to his men,  
How Enid never loved a man but him,  
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,  
Debating his command of silence given,  
And that she now perforce must violate it,  
Held commune with herself, and while she held

He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart

To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly pleased

To find him yet unwounded after fight,  
And hear him breathing low and equally.  
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly, heap'd  
The pieces of his armour in one place,  
All to be there against a sudden need;  
Then dozed awhile herself, but overtoil'd  
By that day's grief and travel, evermore  
Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and then

Went slipping down horrible precipices,  
And strongly striking out her limbs awake;  
Then thought she heard the wild Earl at the door,

With all his rout of random followers,  
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summoning her;

Which was the red cock shouting to the light,

As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy world,  
And glimmer'd on his armour in the room.  
And once again she rose to look at it,  
But touch'd it unawares: jangling, the casque

Fell, and he started up and stared at her.  
Then breaking his command of silence given,

She told him all that Earl Limours had said,

Except the passage that he loved her not;  
Nor left untold the craft herself had used;  
But ended with apology so sweet,  
Low-spoken, and of so few words, and seem'd

So justified by that necessity,  
That tho' he thought 'was it for him she wept

In Devon?' he but gave a wrathful groan,  
Saying, 'Your sweet faces make good fellows fools

And traitors. Call the host and bid him bring

Charger and palfrey.' So she glided out  
Among the heavy breathings of the house,  
And like a household Spirit at the walls  
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and return'd:

Then tending her rough lord, tho' all unask'd,

In silence, did him service as a squire;

## GERAINT AND ENID

Till issuing arm'd he found the host and  
cried,  
'Thy reckoning, friend?' and ere he learnt  
it, 'Take  
Five horses and their armours;' and the  
host  
Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,  
'My lord, I scarce have spent the worth of  
one!'  
'Ye will be all the wealthier,' said the  
Prince,  
And then to Enid, 'Forward! and to-day  
I charge you, Enid, more especially,  
What thing soever ye may hear, or see,  
Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use  
To charge you) that ye speak not but obey.'

And Enid answer'd, 'Yea, my lord, I  
know  
Your wish, and would obey; but riding  
first,  
I hear the violent threats you do not hear,  
I see the danger which you cannot see:  
Then not to give you warning, that seems  
hard;  
Almost beyond me: yet I would obey.'

'Yea so,' said he, 'do it: be not too wise;  
Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,  
Not all mismated with a yawning clown,  
But one with arms to guard his head and  
yours,  
With eyes to find you out however far,  
And ears to hear you even in his dreams.'

With that he turn'd and look'd as keenly  
at her  
As careful robins eye the delver's toil;  
And that within her, which a wanton fool,  
Or hasty judger would have call'd her  
guilt,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.  
And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten  
broad,  
Led from the territory of false Limours  
To the waste earldom of another earl,  
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals call'd  
the Bull,  
Went Enid with her sullen follower on.

Once she look'd back, and when she saw  
him ride  
More near by many a rood than yester-  
morn,  
It wellnigh made her cheerful; till Geraint  
Waving an angry hand as who should say  
'Ye watch me,' sadden'd all her heart  
again.  
But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,  
The sound of many a heavily-galloping  
hoof  
Smote on her ear, and turning round she  
saw  
Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.  
Then not to disobey her lord's behest,  
And yet to give him warning, for he rode  
As if he heard not, moving back she held  
Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.  
At which the warrior in his obstinacy,  
Because she kept the letter of his word,  
Was in a manner pleased, and turning,  
stood.  
And in the moment after, wild Limours,  
Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-  
cloud  
Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking  
storm,  
Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,  
And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,  
Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him,  
and bore  
Down by the length of lance and arm  
beyond  
The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or  
dead,  
And overthrew the next that follow'd him,  
And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind.  
But at the flash and motion of the man  
They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal  
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn  
Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot  
Come slipping o'er their shadows on the  
sand,  
But if a man who stands upon the brink  
But lift a shining hand against the sun,  
There is not left the twinkle of a fin  
Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower;  
So, scared but at the motion of the man,  
Fled all the boon companions of the Earl,  
And left him lying in the public way;  
So vanish friendships only made in wine.

## GERAINT AND ENID

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled  
 Geraint,  
 Who saw the chargers of the two that fell  
 Start from their fallen lords, and wildly fly,  
 Mixt with the flyers. 'Horse and man,' he  
 said,  
 'All of one mind and all right-honest  
 friends!  
 Not a hoof left: and I methinks till now  
 Was honest—paid with horses and with  
 arms;  
 I cannot steal or plunder, nor nor beg:  
 And so what say ye, shall we strip him there  
 Your lover? has your palfrey heart enough  
 To bear his armour? shall we fast, or dine?  
 No?—then do thou, being right honest,  
 pray  
 That we may meet the horsemen of Earl  
 Doorm,  
 I too would still be honest.' Thus he said:  
 And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,  
 And answering not one word, she led the  
 way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss  
 Falls in a far land and he knows it not,  
 But coming back he learns it, and the loss  
 So pains him that he sickens nigh to death;  
 So fared it with Geraint, who being prick'd  
 In combat with the follower of Limours,  
 Bled underneath his armour secretly,  
 And so rode on, nor told his gentle wife  
 What ail'd him, hardly knowing it himself,  
 Till his eye darken'd and his helmet  
 wagg'd;  
 And at a sudden swerving of the road,  
 Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,  
 The Prince, without a word, from his  
 horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,  
 Suddenly came, and at his side all pale  
 Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of his  
 arms,  
 Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye  
 Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,  
 And tearing off her veil of faded silk  
 Had bared her forehead to the blistering  
 sun,  
 And swathed the hurt that drain'd her dear  
 lord's life.

Then after all was done that hand could do,  
 She rested, and her desolation came  
 Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

And many past, but none regarded her,  
 For in that realm of lawless turbulence,  
 A woman weeping for her murder'd mate  
 Was cared as much for as a summer  
 shower:

One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,  
 Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him:  
 Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,  
 Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl;  
 Half whistling and half singing a coarse  
 song,  
 He drove the dust against her veiless eyes:  
 Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm  
 Before an ever-fancied arrow, made  
 The long way smoke beneath him in his  
 fear;  
 At which her palfrey whinnying lifted heel,  
 And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,  
 While the great charger stood, grieved like  
 a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl  
 Doorm,  
 Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet  
 beard,  
 Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,  
 Came riding with a hundred lances up;  
 But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,  
 Cried out with a big voice, 'What, is he  
 dead?'  
 'No, no, not dead!' she answer'd in all  
 haste.  
 'Would some of your kind people take  
 him up,  
 And bear him hence out of this cruel sun?  
 Most surc am I, quite sure, he is not dead.'

Then said Earl Doorm: 'Well, if he be  
 not dead,  
 Why wail ye for him thus? ye seem a child.  
 And be he dead, I count you for a fool;  
 Your wailing will not quicken him: dead  
 or not,  
 Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.  
 Yet, since the face is comely—some of you,  
 Here, take him up, and bear him to our  
 hall:



## GERAINT AND ENID

An if he live, we will have him of our band;  
And if he die, why earth has earth enough  
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,  
A noble one.'

He spake, and past away,  
But left two brawny spearmen, who advanced,  
Each growling like a dog, when his good bone

Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys  
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears  
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,  
Gnawing and growling: so the ruffians growl'd,

Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,  
Their chance of booty from the morning's raid,

Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,  
Such as they brought upon their forays out  
For those that might be wounded; laid him on it

All in the hollow of his shield, and took  
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm,  
(His gentle charger following him unled)  
And cast him and the bier in which he lay  
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,  
And then departed, hot in haste to join  
Their luckier mates, but growling as before,  
And cursing their lost time, and the dead man,

And their own Earl, and their own souls,  
and her.

'They might as well have blest her: she was deaf

To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord,  
There in the naked hall, propping his head,  
And chafing his pale hands, and calling to him.

Till at the last he waken'd from his swoon,  
And found his own dear bride propping his head,

And chafing his faint hands, and calling to him;

And felt the warm tears falling on his face;  
And said to his own heart, 'She weeps for me.'

And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as dead,

That he might prove her to the uttermost,

And say to his own heart, 'She weeps for me.'

But in the falling afternoon return'd  
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the hall.

His lusty spearmen follow'd him with noise:

Each hurling down a heap of things that rang

Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,  
And doff'd his helm: and then there flutter'd in,

Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,  
A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,  
And mingled with the spearmen: and Earl Doorm

Struck with a knife's haft hard against the board,

And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his spears.

And men brought in whole hogs and quarter beeves,

And all the hall was dim with steam of flesh:

And none spake word, but all sat down at once,

And ate with tumult in the naked hall,  
Feeding like horses when you hear them feed;

Till Enid shrank far back into herself,  
To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.

But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he would,

He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and found  
A damsel drooping in a corner of it.

Then he remember'd her, and how she wept;

And out of her there came a power upon him;

And rising on the sudden he said, 'Eat!  
I never yet beheld a thing so pale.

God's curse, it makes me mad to see you weep.

Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had your good man,

For were I dead who is it would weep for me?

Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath  
Have I beheld a lily like yourself.

## GERAINT AND ENID

And so there lived some colour in your  
cheek,  
There is not one among my gentlewomen  
Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.  
But listen to me, and by me be ruled,  
And I will do the thing I have not done,  
For ye shall share my earldom with me,  
girl,  
And we will live like two birds in one nest,  
And I will fetch you forage from all fields,  
For I compel all creatures to my will.'

He spoke: the brawny spearman let his  
cheek  
Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and  
turning stared;  
While some, whose souls the old serpent  
long had drawn  
Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd  
leaf  
And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's  
ear  
What shall not be recorded—women they,  
Women, or what had been those gracious  
things,  
But now desired the humbling of their  
best,  
Yea, would have help'd him to it: and all  
at once  
They hated her, who took no thought of  
them,  
But answer'd in low voice, her meek head  
yet  
Drooping, 'I pray you of your courtesies,  
He being as he is, to let me be.'

She spake so low he hardly heard her  
speak,  
But like a mighty patron, satisfied  
With what himself had done so graciously,  
Assumed that she had thank'd him, adding,  
'Yea,  
Eat and be glad, for I account you mine.'

She answer'd meekly, 'How should I be  
glad  
Henceforth in all the world at anything,  
Until my lord arise and look upon me?'

Here the huge Earl cried out upon her  
talk,  
As all but empty heart and weariness

And sickly nothing; suddenly seized on  
her,  
And bare her by main violence to the  
board,  
And thrust the dish before her, crying,  
'Eat.'

'No, no,' said Enid, vext, 'I will not eat  
'Till yonder man upon the bier arise,  
And eat with me.' 'Drink, then,' he  
answer'd. 'Here!'

(And fill'd a horn with wine and held it to  
her,)  
'Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with fight, or  
hot,  
God's curse, with anger—often I myself,  
Before I well have drunken, scarce can eat:  
Drink therefore and the wine will change  
your will.'

'Not so,' she cried, 'by Heaven, I will  
not drink  
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do it,  
And drink with me; and if he rise no more,  
I will not look at wine until I die.'

At this he turn'd all red and paced his  
hall,  
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper lip,  
And coming up close to her, said at last:  
'Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies,  
'Take warning: yonder man is surely dead;  
And I compel all creatures to my will.  
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore wail for  
one,

Who put your beauty to this flout and  
scorn  
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,  
Beholding how ye butt against my wish,  
That I forbear you thus: cross me no more.  
At least put off to please me this poor gown,  
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's weed:  
I love that beauty should go beautifully:  
For see ye not my gentlewomen here,  
How gay, how suited to the house of one  
Who loves that beauty should go beauti-  
fully?

Rise therefore; robe yourself in this: obey.'

He spoke, and one among his gentle-  
women  
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign loom,

## GERAINT AND ENID

Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue  
Play'd into green, and thicker down the  
front

With jewels than the sward with drops of  
dew,

When all night long a cloud clings to the  
hill,

And with the dawn ascending lets the day  
Strike where it clung: so thickly shone the  
gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be moved  
Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,  
With life-long injuries burning unavenged,  
And now their hour has come; and Enid  
said:

'In this poor gown my dear lord found  
me first,  
And loved me serving in my father's hall:  
In this poor gown I rode with him to court,  
And there the Queen array'd me like the  
sun:

In this poor gown he bad me clothe myself,  
When now we rode upon this fatal quest  
Of honour, where no honour can be gain'd:  
And this poor gown I will not cast aside  
Until himself arise a living man,  
And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough:  
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be:  
I never loved, can never love but him:  
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,  
He being as he is, to let me be.'

Then strode the brute Earl up and down  
his hall,  
And took his russet beard between his  
teeth;  
Last, coming up quite close, and in his  
mood  
Crying, 'I count it of no more avail,  
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with you;  
Take my salute,' unknighly with flat hand,  
However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,  
And since she thought, 'He had not dared  
to do it,  
Except he surely knew my lord was dead,'  
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,  
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,

Which sees the trapper coming thro' the  
wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his  
sword,

(It lay beside him in the hollow shield),  
Made but a single bound, and with a sweep  
of it

Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a  
ball

The russet-bearded head roll'd on the  
floor.

So died Earl Doorm by him he counted  
dead.

And all the men and women in the hall  
Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and  
fled

Yelling as from a spectre, and the two  
Were left alone together, and he said:

'Enid, I have used you worse than that  
dead man;

Done you more wrong: we both have  
undergone

That trouble which has left me thrice your  
own:

Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.  
And here I lay this penance on myself,  
Not, tho' mine own ears heard you yester-  
morn—

You thought me sleeping, but I heard you  
say,

I heard you say, that you were no true wife:  
I swear I will not ask your meaning in it:  
I do believe yourself against yourself,  
And will henceforward rather die than  
doubt.'

And Enid could not say one tender word,  
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart:  
She only pray'd him, 'Fly, they will return  
And slay you; fly, your charger is without,  
My palfrey lost.' 'Then, Enid, shall you  
ride

Behind me.' 'Yea,' said Enid, 'let us go.'  
And moving out they found the stately  
horse,

Who now no more a vassal to the thief,  
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,  
Neigh'd with all gladness as they came,  
and stoop'd

## GERAINT AND ENID

With a low whinny toward the pair: and she  
 Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,  
 Glad also; then Geraint upon the horse  
 Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his  
 foot  
 She set her own and climb'd; he turn'd his  
 face  
 And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast her  
 arms  
 About him, and at once they rode away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise  
 O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,  
 Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind  
 Than lived thro' her, who in that perilous  
 hour  
 Put hand to hand beneath her husband's  
 heart,  
 And felt him hers again: she did not weep,  
 But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist  
 Like that which kept the heart of Eden  
 green  
 Before the useful trouble of the rain:  
 Yet not so misty were her meek blue eyes  
 As not to see before them on the path,  
 Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,  
 A knight of Arthur's court, who laid his  
 lance  
 In rest, and made as if to fall upon him.  
 Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of blood,  
 She, with her mind all full of what had  
 chanced,  
 Shriek'd to the stranger 'Slay not a dead  
 man!'  
 'The voice of Enid,' said the knight; but  
 she,  
 Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,  
 Was moved so much the more, and  
 shriek'd again,  
 'O cousin, slay not him who gave you life.'  
 And Edyrn moving frankly forward spake:  
 'My lord Geraint, I greet you with all love;  
 I took you for a bandit knight of Doorm;  
 And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon him,  
 Who love you, Prince, with something of  
 the love  
 Wherewith we love the Heaven that  
 chastens us.  
 For once, when I was up so high in pride  
 That I was halfway down the slope to Hell,

By overthrowing me you threw me higher.  
 Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table  
 Round,  
 And since I knew this Earl, when I myself  
 Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,  
 I come the mouthpiece of our King to  
 Doorm  
 (The King is close behind me) bidding him  
 Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,  
 Submit, and hear the judgment of the  
 King.'

'He hears the judgment of the King of  
 kings,'  
 Cried the wan Prince; 'and lo, the powers  
 of Doorm  
 Are scatter'd,' and he pointed to the field,  
 Where, huddled here and there on mound  
 and knoll,  
 Were men and women staring and aghast,  
 While some yet fled; and then he plainlier  
 told  
 How the huge Earl lay slain within his hall.  
 But when the knight besought him,  
 'Follow me,  
 Prince, to the camp, and in the King's own  
 ear  
 Speak what has chanced; ye surely have  
 endured  
 Strange chances here alone;' that other  
 flush'd,  
 And hung his head, and halted in reply,  
 Fearing the mild face of the blameless  
 King,  
 And after madness acted question ask'd:  
 Till Edyrn crying, 'If ye will not go  
 To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,'  
 'Enough,' he said, 'I follow,' and they  
 went.  
 But Enid in their going had two fears,  
 One from the bandit scatter'd in the field,  
 And one from Edyrn. Every now and then,  
 When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her side,  
 She shrank a little. In a hollow land,  
 From which old fires have broken, men  
 may fear  
 Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said:  
 'Fair and dear cousin, you that most had  
 cause  
 To fear me, fear no longer, I am changed.

## GERAINT AND ENID

Yourself were first the blameless cause to make  
 My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood  
 Break into furious flame; being repulsed  
 By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and wrought  
 Until I overturn'd him; then set up  
 (With one main purpose ever at my heart)  
 My haughty jousts, and took a paramour;  
 Did her mock-honour as the fairest fair,  
 And, toppling over all antagonism,  
 So wax'd in pride, that I believed myself  
 Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh mad:  
 And, but for my main purpose in these  
 jousts,  
 I should have slain your father, seized  
 yourself.  
 I lived in hope that sometime you would  
 come  
 To these my lists with him whom best you  
 loved;  
 And there, poor cousin, with your meek  
 blue eyes,  
 The truest eyes that ever answer'd Heaven,  
 Behold me overturn and trample on him.  
 Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray'd  
 to me,  
 I should not less have kill'd him. And you  
 came,—  
 But once you came,—and with your own  
 true eyes  
 Beheld the man you loved (I speak as one  
 Speaks of a service done him) overthrow  
 My proud self, and my purpose three years  
 old,  
 And set his foot upon me, and give me life.  
 There was I broken down; there was I  
 saved:  
 Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating the  
 life  
 He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.  
 And all the penance the Queen laid upon  
 me  
 Was but to rest awhile within her court;  
 Where first as sullen as a beast new-caged,  
 And waiting to be treated like a wolf,  
 Because I knew my deeds were known, I  
 found,  
 Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,  
 Such fine reserve and noble reticence,  
 Manners so kind, yet stately, such a grace

Of tenderest courtesy, that I began  
 To glance behind me at my former life,  
 And find that it had been the wolf's indeed:  
 And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high  
 saint,  
 Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,  
 Subdued me somewhat to that gentleness,  
 Which, when it weds with manhood, makes  
 a man.  
 And you were often there about the Queen,  
 But saw me not, or mark'd not if you saw;  
 Nor did I care or dare to speak with you,  
 But kept myself aloof till I was changed;  
 And fear not, cousin; I am changed in-  
 deed.'

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,  
 Like simple noble natures, credulous  
 Of what they long for, good in friend or foe,  
 There most in those who most have done  
 them ill.  
 And when they reach'd the camp the King  
 himself  
 Advanced to greet them, and beholding  
 her  
 Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a word,  
 But went apart with E'dyrn, whom he held  
 In converse for a little, and return'd,  
 And, gravely smiling, lifted her from horse,  
 And kiss'd her with all pureness, brother-  
 like,  
 And show'd an empty tent allotted her,  
 And glancing for a minute, till he saw her  
 Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and said:

'Prince, when of late ye pray'd me for  
 my leave  
 To move to your own land, and there  
 defend  
 Your marches, I was prick'd with some  
 reproof,  
 As one that let foul wrong stagnate and be,  
 By having look'd too much thro' alien eyes,  
 And wrought too long with delegated  
 hands,  
 Not used mine own: but now behold me  
 come  
 To cleanse this common sewer of all my  
 realm,  
 With E'dyrn and with others: have ye  
 look'd

## GERAINT AND ENID

At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly  
changed?

This work of his is great and wonderful.  
His very face with change of heart is  
changed.

The world will not believe a man repents:  
And this wise world of ours is mainly right.  
Full seldom doth a man repent, or use  
Both grace and will to pick the vicious  
quitch

Of blood and custom wholly out of him,  
And make all clean, and plant himself  
afresh.

Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart  
As I will weed this land before I go.  
I, therefore, made him of our Table Round,  
Not rashly, but have proved him every-  
way

One of our noblest, our most valorous,  
Sanest and most obedient: and indeed  
This work of Edyrn wrought upon him-  
self

After a life of violence, seems to me  
A thousand-fold more great and wonderful  
Than if some knight of mine, risking his  
life,

My subject with my subjects under him,  
Should make an onslaught single on a  
realm

Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,  
And were himself nigh wounded to the  
death.'

So spake the King; low bow'd the  
Prince, and felt

His work was neither great nor wonderful,  
And past to Enid's tent; and thither came  
The King's own leech to look into his hurt;  
And Enid tended on him there; and there  
Her constant motion round him, and the  
breath

Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,  
Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood  
With deeper and with ever deeper love,  
As the south-west that blowing Bala lake  
Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,  
The blameless King went forth and cast  
his eyes

On each of all whom Uther left in charge

Long since, to guard the justice of the  
King:

He look'd and found them wanting; and as  
now

Men weed the white horse on the Berk-  
shire hills

To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,  
He rooted out the slothful officer

Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at  
wrong,

And in their chairs set up a stronger race  
With hearts and hands, and sent a thou-  
sand men

To till the wastes, and moving every where  
Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,  
And broke the bandit holds and cleansed  
the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again,  
they past

With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.

There the great Queen once more em-  
braced her friend,

And clothed her in apparel like the day.  
And tho' Geraint could never take again  
That comfort from their converse which  
he took

Before the Queen's fair name was breathed  
upon,

He rested well content that all was well.

Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them to the  
shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own  
land.

And there he kept the justice of the King  
So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts  
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died:  
And being ever foremost in the chase,  
And victor at the tilt and tournament,  
They call'd him the great Prince and man  
of men.

But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call  
Enid the Fair, a grateful people named  
Enid the Good; and in their halls arose  
The cry of children, Enids and Geraints  
Of times to be; nor did he doubt her more,  
But rested in her fealty, till he crown'd  
A happy life with a fair death, and fell  
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea  
In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

## BALIN AND BALAN

### BALIN AND BALAN

PELLAM the King, who held and lost with  
Lot

In that first war, and had his realm restored  
But render'd tributary, fail'd of late  
'To send his tribute; wherefore Arthur  
call'd

His treasurer, one of many years, and  
spake,

'Go thou with him and him and bring it  
to us,

Lest we should set one truer on his throne.  
Man's word is God in man.'

His Baron said

'We go but harken: there be two strange  
knights

Who sit near Camelot at a fountain-side,  
A mile beneath the forest, challenging  
And overthrowing every knight who comes.  
Wilt thou I undertake them as we pass,  
And send them to thee?'

Arthur laugh'd upon him.

'Old friend, too old to be so young, depart,  
Delay not thou for ought, but let them sit,  
Until they find a lustier than themselves.'

So these departed. Early, one fair dawn,  
The light-wing'd spirit of his youth  
return'd

On Arthur's heart; he arm'd himself and  
went,

So coming to the fountain-side beheld  
Balin and Balan sitting statuelike,  
Brethren, to right and left the spring, that  
down,

From underneath a plume of lady-fern,  
Sang, and the sand danced at the bottom  
of it.

And on the right of Balin Balin's horse  
Was fast beside an alder, on the left  
Of Balan Balan's near a poplartree.

'Fair Sirs,' said Arthur, 'wherefore sit ye  
here?'

Balin and Balan answer'd 'For the sake  
Of glory; we be mightier men than all  
In Arthur's court; that also have we  
proved;

For whatsoever knight against us came  
Or I or he have easily overthrown.'

'I too,' said Arthur, 'am of Arthur's hall,  
But rather proven in his Paynim wars  
Than famous jousts; but see, or proven or  
not,

Whether me likewise ye can overthrow.'  
And Arthur lightly smote the brethren  
down,  
And lightly so return'd, and no man knew.

Then Balin rose, and Balan, and beside  
The carolling water set themselves again,  
And spake no word until the shadow  
turn'd;

When from the fringe of coppice round  
them burst

A spangled pursuivant, and crying 'Sirs,  
Rise, follow! ye be sent for by the King,'  
They follow'd; whom when Arthur seeing  
ask'd

'Tell me your names; why sat ye by the  
well?'

Balin the stillness of a minute broke  
Saying 'An unmelodious name to thee,  
Balin, "the Savage"—that addition thine—  
My brother and my better, this man here,  
Balan. I smote upon the naked skull  
A thrall of thine in open hall, my hand  
Was gauntleted, half slew him; for I heard  
He had spoken evil of me; thy just wrath  
Sent me a three-years' exile from thine  
eyes.

I have not lived my life delightsomely:  
For I that did that violence to thy thrall,  
Had often wrought some fury on myself,  
Saving for Balan: those three kingless  
years

Have past—were wormwood-bitter to me.  
King,

Methought that if we sat beside the well,  
And hurl'd to ground what knight soever  
spurr'd

Against us, thou would'st take me gladlier  
back,

And make, as ten-times worthier to be  
thine

Than twenty Balins, Balan knight. I have  
said.

Not so—not all. A man of thine to-day  
Abash'd us both, and brake my boast. Thy  
will?'

Said Arthur 'Thou hast ever spoken truth;

## BALIN AND BALAN

Thy too fierce manhood would not let thee lie.

Rise, my true knight. As children learn, be thou

Wiser for falling! walk with me, and move  
To music with thine Order and the King.  
Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren, stands  
Vacant, but thou retake it, mine again!

Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd hall,  
The Lost one Found was greeted as in  
Heaven

With joy that blazed itself in woodland  
wealth

Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of flowers,  
Along the walls and down the board; they  
sat,

And cup clash'd cup; they drank and some  
one sang,

Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome, where-  
upon

Their common shout in chorus, mounting,  
made

Those banners of twelve battles overhead  
Stir, as they stir'd of old, when Arthur's  
host

Proclaim'd him Victor, and the day was  
won.

Then Balan added to their Order lived  
A wealthier life than heretofore with these  
And Balin, till their embassy return'd.

'Sir King' they brought report 'we  
hardly found,

So bush'd about it is with gloom, the hall  
Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellam, once  
A Christless foe of thine as ever dash'd  
Horse against horse; but seeing that thy  
realm

Hath prosper'd in the name of Christ, the  
King

Took, as in rival heat, to holy things;  
And finds himself descended from the  
Saint

Arimathæan Joseph; him who first  
Brought the great faith to Britain over seas;  
He boasts his life as purer than thine own;  
Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse abeat;  
Hath push'd aside his faithful wife, nor  
lets

Or dame or damsel enter at his gates  
Lest he should be polluted. This gray King  
Show'd us a shrine wherein were wonders  
—yea—

Rich arks with priceless bones of martyr-  
dom,

Thorns of the crown and shivers of the  
cross,

And therewithal (for thus he told us)  
brought

By holy Joseph hither, that same spear  
Wherewith the Roman pierced the side of

Christ.  
He much amazed us; after, when we  
sought

The tribute, answer'd "I have quite fore-  
gone

All matters of this world: Garlon, mine  
heir,

Of him demand it," which this Garlon  
gave

With much ado, railing at thine and thee.

'But when we left, in those deep woods  
we found

A knight of thine spear-stricken from  
behind,

Dead, whom we buried; more than one  
of us

Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman there  
Reported of some demon in the woods

Was once a man, who driven by evil  
tongues

From all his fellows, lived alone, and came  
To learn black magic, and to hate his kind  
With such a hate, that when he died, his  
soul

Became a Fiend, which, as the man in life  
Was wounded by blind tongues he saw not  
whence,

Strikes from behind. This woodman  
show'd the cave

From which he sallies, and wherein he  
dwelt.

We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no more.'

Then Arthur, 'Let who goes before me,  
see

He do not fall behind me: foully slain  
And villainously! who will hunt for me  
This demon of the woods?' Said Balan, 'I'



## BALIN AND BALAN

So claim'd the quest and rode away, but first,  
 Embracing Balin, 'Good my brother, hear!  
 Let not thy moods prevail, when I am gone  
 Who used to lay them! hold them outer fiends,  
 Who leap at thee to tear thee; shake them aside,  
 Dreams ruling when wit sleeps! yea, but to dream  
 That any of these would wrong thee, wrongs thyself.  
 Witness their flowery welcome. Bound are they  
 To speak no evil. Truly save for fears,  
 My fears for thee, so rich a fellowship  
 Would make me wholly blest: thou one of them,  
 Be one indeed: consider them, and all  
 Their bearing in their common bond of love,  
 No more of hatred than in Heaven itself,  
 No more of jealousy than in Paradise.'

So Balan warn'd, and went; Balin remain'd:  
 Who—for but three brief moons had glanced away  
 From being knighted till he smote the thrall,  
 And faded from the presence into years  
 Of exile—now would strictlier set himself  
 To learn what Arthur meant by courtesy,  
 Manhood, and knighthood; wherefore hover'd round  
 Lancelot, but when he mark'd his high sweet smile  
 In passing, and a transitory word  
 Make knight or churl or child or damsel seem  
 From being smiled at happier in themselves—  
 Sigh'd, as a boy lame-born beneath a height,  
 'That glooms his valley, sighs to see the peak  
 Sun-flush'd, or touch at night the northern star;  
 For one from out his village lately climb'd  
 And brought report of azure lands and fair,

Far seen to left and right; and he himself  
 Hath hardly scaled with help a hundred feet  
 Up from the base: so Balin marvelling oft  
 How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd to move,  
 Groan'd, and at times would mutter,  
 'These be gifts,  
 Born with the blood, not learnable, divine,  
 Beyond my reach. Well had I foughten—well—  
 In those fierce wars, struck hard—and had I crown'd  
 With my slain self the heaps of whom I slew—  
 So—better!—But this worship of the Queen,  
 That honour too wherein she holds him—this,  
 This was the sunshine that hath given the man  
 A growth, a name that branches o'er the rest,  
 And strength against all odds, and what the King  
 So prizes—overprizes—gentleness.  
 Her likewise would I worship an I might.  
 I never can be close with her, as he  
 That brought her hither. Shall I pray the King  
 To let me bear some token of his Queen  
 Whereon to gaze, remembering her—forget  
 My heats and violences? live afresh?  
 What, if the Queen disdain'd to grant it! nay  
 Being so stately-gentle, would she make  
 My darkness blackness? and with how sweet grace  
 She greeted my return! Bold will I be—  
 Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,  
 In lieu of this rough beast upon my shield,  
 Langued gules, and tooth'd with grinning savagery.'

And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought him, said  
 'What wilt thou bear?' Balin was bold, and ask'd  
 To bear her own crown-royal upon shield,

## BALIN AND BALAN

Whereat she smiled and turn'd her to the King,  
Who answer'd 'Thou shalt put the crown to use.

The crown is but the shadow of the King,  
And this a shadow's shadow, let him have it,  
So this will help him of his violences!  
'No shadow' said Sir Balin 'O my Queen,  
But light to me! no shadow, O my King,  
But golden earnest of a gentler life!'

So Balin bare the crown, and all the knights  
Approved him, and the Queen, and all the world  
Made music, and he felt his being move  
In music with his Order, and the King.

The nightingale, full-toned in middle May,  
Hath ever and anon a note so thin  
It seems another voice in other groves;  
Thus, after some quick burst of sudden wrath,  
The music in him seem'd to change, and grow  
Faint and far-off.

And once he saw the thrall  
His passion half had gauntleted to death,  
That causer of his banishment and shame,  
Smile at him, as he deem'd, presumptuously:  
His arm half rose to strike again, but fell:  
The memory of that cognizance on shield  
Weighted it down, but in himself he moan'd:

'Too high this mount of Camelot for me:  
These high-set courtesies are not for me.  
Shall I not rather prove the worse for these?  
Fierier and stormier from restraining,  
break  
Into some madness ev'n before the Queen?'

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain home,  
And glancing on the window, when the gloom  
Of twilight deepens round it, seems a flame  
That rages in the woodland far below,  
So when his moods were darken'd, court  
and King

And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's hall  
Shadow'd an angry distance: yet he strove  
To learn the graces of their Table, fought  
Hard with himself, and seem'd at length in peace.

Then chanced, one morning, that Sir Balin sat  
Close-bower'd in that garden nigh the hall.

A walk of roses ran from door to door;  
A walk of lilies crost it to the bower:  
And down that range of roses the great Queen

Came with slow steps, the morning on her face;  
And all in shadow from the counter door  
Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at once,  
As if he saw not, glanced aside, and paced  
The long white walk of lilies toward the bower.

Follow'd the Queen; Sir Balin heard her 'Prince,  
Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen,  
As pass without good morrow to thy Queen?'

To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes on earth,  
'Fain would I still be loyal to the Queen.'  
'Yea so' she said 'but so to pass me by—  
So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,  
Whom all men rate the king of courtesy.  
Let be: ye stand, fair lord, as in a dream.'

Then Lancelot with his hand among the flowers

'Yea—for a dream. Last night methought I saw  
That maiden Saint who stands with lily in hand

In yonder shrine. All round her prest the dark,  
And all the light upon her silver face  
Flow'd from the spiritual lily that she held.

Lol these her emblems drew mine eyes—away:

For see, how perfect-pure! As light a flush  
As hardly tints the blossom of the quince  
Would mar their charm of stainless maidenhood.'

## BALIN AND BALAN

'Sweeter to me' she said 'this garden rose  
Deep-hued and many-folded! sweeter still  
The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom of  
May.

Prince, we have ridd'n before among the  
flowers

In those fair days—not all as cool as these,  
'Tho' season-earlier. Art thou sad? or sick?  
Our noble King will send thee his own  
leech—

Sick? or for any matter anger'd at me?'

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes; they  
dwelt

Deep-tranced on hers, and could not fall:  
her hue

Changed at his gaze: so turning side by  
side

They past, and Balin started from his  
bower.

'Queen? subject? but I see not what I  
see.

Damsel and lover? hear not what I hear.  
My father hath begotten me in his wrath.  
I suffer from the things before me, know,  
Learn nothing; am not worthy to be  
knight;

A churl, a clown!' and in him gloom on  
gloom

Deepen'd: he sharply caught his lance and  
shield,

Nor stay'd to crave permission of the King,  
But, mad for strange adventure, dash'd  
away.

He took the selfsame track as Balan, saw  
The fountain where they sat together,  
sigh'd

'Was I not better there with him?' and  
rode

The skyless woods, but under open blue  
Came on the hoarhead woodman at a bough  
Wearily hewing. 'Churl, thine axe!' he  
cried,

Descended, and disjointed it at a blow:  
To whom the woodman utter'd wonder-  
ingly

'Lord, thou couldst lay the Devil of these  
woods

If arm of flesh could lay him.' Balin cried

'Him, or the viler devil who plays his part,  
To lay that devil would lay the Devil in  
me.'

'Nay' said the churl, 'our devil is a truth,  
I saw the flash of him but yestereven.

And some *do* say that our Sir Garlon too  
Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride  
unseen.

Look to the cave.' But Balin answer'd him  
'Old fabler, these be fancies of the churl,  
Look to thy woodcraft,' and so leaving  
him,

Now with slack rein and careless of him-  
self,

Now with dug spur and raving at himself,  
Now with droopt brow down the long  
glades he rode;

So mark'd not on his right a cavern-chasm  
Yawn over darkness, where, nor far within,  
The whole day died, but, dying, gleam'd  
on rocks

Roof-pendent, sharp; and others from the  
floor,

Tusklike, arising, made that mouth of night  
Whereout the Demon issued up from Hell.  
He mark'd not this, but blind and deaf to  
all

Save that chain'd rage, which ever yelp't  
within,

Past eastward from the falling sun. At once  
He felt the hollow-beaten mosses thud  
And tremble, and then the shadow of a  
spear,

Shot from behind him, ran along the  
ground.

Sideways he started from the path, and  
saw,

With pointed lance as if to pierce, a shape,  
A light of armour by him flash, and pass  
And vanish in the woods; and follow'd  
this,

But all so blind in rage that unawares  
He burst his lance against a forest bough,  
Dishorsed himself, and rose again, and fled  
Far, till the castle of a King, the hall  
Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly draped  
With streaming grass, appear'd, low-built  
but strong;

The ruinous donjon as a knoll of moss,  
The battlement overtop with ivytods,  
A home of bats, in every tower an owl.

## BALIN AND BALAN

Then spake the men of Pellam crying  
 'Lord,  
 Why wear ye this crown-royal upon  
 shield?'

Said Balin 'For the fairest and the best  
 Of ladies living gave me this to bear.'  
 So stall'd his horse, and strode across the  
 court,

But found the greetings both of knight and  
 King

Faint in the low dark hall of banquet:  
 leaves

I laid their green faces flat against the panes,  
 Sprays grated, and the canker'd boughs  
 without

Whined in the wood; for all was hush'd  
 within,

Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise ask'd  
 'Why wear ye that crown-royal?' Balin said  
 'The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I, and  
 all,

As fairest, best and purest, granted me  
 To bear it! Such a sound (for Arthur's  
 knights

Were hated strangers in the hall) as makes  
 The white swan-mother, sitting, when she  
 hears

A strange knee rustle thro' her secret reeds,  
 Made Garlon, hissing; then he sourly  
 smiled.

'Fairest I grant her: I have seen; but best,  
 Best, purest? *thou* from Arthur's hall, and  
 yet

So simple! hast thou eyes, or if, are these  
 So far besotted that they fail to see  
 This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret  
 shame?

Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes.'

A goblet on the board by Balin, boss'd  
 With holy Joseph's legend, on his right  
 Stood, all of massiest bronze: one side had  
 sea

And ship and sail and angels blowing on it:  
 And one was rough with wattling, and the  
 walls

Of that low church he built at Glastonbury.  
 This Balin graspt, but while in act to hurl,  
 Thro' memory of that token on the shield  
 Relax'd his hold: 'I will be gentle' he  
 thought

'And passing gentle' caught his hand away  
 Then fiercely to Sir Garlon 'Eyes have I  
 That saw to-day the shadow of a spear,  
 Shot from behind me, run along the  
 ground;

Eyes too that long have watch'd how  
 Lancelot draws

From homage to the best and purest,  
 might,

Name, manhood, and a grace, but scanty  
 thine,

Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst  
 endure

To mouth so huge a foulness—to thy  
 guest,

Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon talk!  
 Let be! no more!'

But not the less by night  
 The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his rest,  
 Stung him in dreams. At length, and dim  
 thro' leaves

Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated, and  
 old boughs

Whined in the wood. He rose, descended,  
 met

The scorn in the castle court, and fain,  
 For hate and loathing, would have past  
 him by;

But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking-  
 wise;

'What, wear ye still that same crown-  
 scandalous?'

His countenance blacken'd, and his fore-  
 head veins

Bloated, and branch'd; and tearing out of  
 sheath

The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery 'Ha!  
 So thou be shadow, here I make thee  
 ghost,'

Hard upon helm smote him, and the blade  
 flew

Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the  
 stones.

Then Garlon, reeling slowly backward,  
 fell,

And Balin by the banneret of his helm  
 Dragg'd him, and struck, but from the  
 castle a cry

Sounded across the court, and—men-at-  
 arms,

## BALIN AND BALAN

A score with pointed lances, making at him—

He dash'd the pummel at the foremost face,  
Beneath a low door dipt, and made his feet  
Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till he  
mark'd

The portal of King Pellam's chapel wide  
And inward to the wall; he stept behind;  
Thence in a moment heard them pass like  
wolves

Howling; but while he stared about the  
shrine,

In which he scarce could spy the Christ for  
Saints,

Beheld before a golden altar lie

The longest lance his eyes had ever seen,  
Point-painted red; and seizing thereupon  
Push'd thro' an open casement down,  
lean'd on it,

Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth;

Then hand at ear, and harkening from  
what side

The blindfold rummage buried in the walls  
Might echo, ran the counter path, and  
found

His charger, mounted on him and away.  
An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to the  
left,

One overhead; and Pellam's feeble cry  
'Stay, stay him! he defileth heavenly things  
With earthly uses'—made him quickly dive  
Beneath the boughs, and race thro' many  
a mile

Of dense and open, till his goodly horse,  
Arising wearily at a fallen oak,  
Stumbled headlong, and cast him face to  
ground.

Half-wroth he had not ended, but all  
glad,

Knightlike, to find his charger yet unlamed,  
Sir Balin drew the shield from off his neck,  
Stared at the priceless cognizance, and  
thought

'I have shamed thee so that now thou  
shamest me,

Thee will I bear no more,' high on a  
branch

Hung it, and turn'd aside into the woods,  
And there in gloom cast himself all along,  
Moaning 'My violences, my violences!'

But now the wholesome music of the  
wood

Was dumb'd by one from out the hall of  
Mark

A damsel-errant, warbling, as she rode  
The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her  
Squire.

'The fire of Heaven has kill'd the barren  
cold,

And kindled all the plain and all the wold.  
The new leaf ever pushes off the old.

The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.

'Old priest, who mumble worship in your  
quire—

Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world's  
desire,

Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire!  
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.

'The fire of Heaven is on the dusty ways.

The wayside blossoms open to the blaze.  
The whole wood-world is one full peal of  
praise.

The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.

'The fire of Heaven is lord of all things  
good,

And starve not thou this fire within thy  
blood,

But follow Vivien thro' the fiery flood!  
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell!'

Then turning to her Squire 'This fire of  
Heaven,

This old sun-worship, boy, will rise again,  
And beat the cross to earth, and break the

King  
And all his Table.'

Then they reach'd a glade,  
Where under one long lane of cloudless air  
Before another wood, the royal crown  
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless elm  
Drew the vague glance of Vivien, and her  
Squire;

Amazed were these; 'Lo there' she cried—  
'a crown—

Borne by some high lord-prince of Arthur's  
hall,

## BALIN AND BALAN

And there a horse! the rider? where is he?  
See, yonder lies one dead within the wood.  
Not dead; he stirs!—but sleeping. I will  
speak.

Hail, royal knight, we break on thy sweet  
rest,

Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble  
deeds.

But bounden art thou, if from Arthur's hall,  
To help the weak. Behold, I fly from  
shame,

A lustful King, who sought to win my love  
Thro' evil ways: the knight, with whom I  
rode,

Hath suffer'd misadventure, and my squire  
Hath in him small defence; but thou, Sir  
Prince,

Wilt surely guide me to the warrior King,  
Arthur the blameless, pure as any maid,  
To get me shelter for my maidenhood.

I charge thee by that crown upon thy  
shield,

And by the great Queen's name, arise and  
hence.'

And Balin rose, 'Thither no more! nor  
Prince

Nor knight am I, but one that hath de-  
famed

The cognizance she gave me: here I dwell  
Savage among the savage woods, here  
die—

Die: let the wolves' black maws en-  
sepulchre

Their brother beast, whose anger was his  
lord.

O me, that such a name as Guinevere's,  
Which our high Lancelot hath so lifted up,  
And been thereby uplifted, should thro'  
me,

My violence, and my villainy, come to  
shame.'

Thereat she suddenly laugh'd and shrill,  
anon.

Sigh'd all as suddenly. Said Balin to her  
'Is this thy courtesy—to mock me, ha?  
Hence, for I will not with thee.' Again she  
sigh'd

'Pardon, sweet lord! we maidens often  
laugh

When sick at heart, when rather we should  
weep.

I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon thy  
rest,

And now full loth am I to break thy dream,  
But thou art man, and canst abide a  
truth,

Tho' bitter. Hither, boy—and mark me  
well.

Dost thou remember at Caerleon once—  
A year ago—nay, then I love thee not—

Ay, thou rememberest well—one summer  
dawn—

By the great tower—Caerleon upon Usk—  
Nay, truly we were hidden: this fair lord,

The flower of all their vestal knighthood,  
knelt

In amorous homage—knelt—what else?—  
O ay

Knelt, and drew down from out his night-  
black hair

And mumbled that white hand whose  
ring'd caress

Had wander'd from her own King's golden  
head,

And lost itself in darkness, till she cried—  
I thought the great tower would crash

down on both—  
'Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me on the

lips,  
Thou art my King.' This lad, whose

lightest word  
Is mere white truth in simple nakedness,

Saw them embrace: he reddens, cannot  
speak,

So bashful, he! but all the maiden Saints,  
The deathless mother-maidenhood of

Heaven,  
Cry out upon her. Up then, ride with me!

Talk not of shame! thou canst not, an thou  
would'st,

Do these more shame than these have done  
themselves.'

She lied with ease; but horror-stricken  
he,

Remembering that dark bower at Camelot,  
Breathed in a dismal whisper 'It is truth.'

Sunnily she smiled 'And even in this lone  
wood,

Sweet lord, ye do right well to whisper this.

## BALIN AND BALAN

Fools prate, and perish traitors. Woods  
 have tongues,  
 As walls have ears: but thou shalt go  
 with me,  
 And we will speak at first exceeding low.  
 Meet is it the good King be not deceived.  
 See now, I set thee high on vantage ground,  
 I'rom whence to watch the time, and  
 eagle-like  
 Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the  
 Queen.'

She ceased; his evil spirit upon him  
 leapt,  
 He ground his teeth together, sprang with  
 a yell,  
 Tore from the branch, and cast on earth,  
 the shield,  
 Drove his mail'd heel athwart the royal  
 crown,  
 Stamp'd all into defacement, hurl'd it from  
 him  
 Among the forest weeds, and cursed the  
 tale,  
 The told-of, and the teller.

That weird yell,  
 Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or beast,  
 Thrill'd thro' the woods; and Balan lurking  
 there

(His quest was unaccomplish'd) heard and  
 thought  
 'The scream of that Wood-devil I came to  
 quell!'

Then nearing 'Lo! he hath slain some  
 brother-knight,

And tramples on the goodly shield to show  
 His loathing of our Order and the Queen.  
 My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil or  
 man

Guard thou thine head.' Sir Balin spake  
 not word,

But snatch'd a sudden buckler from the  
 Squire,  
 And vaulted on his horse, and so they  
 crash'd

In onset, and King Pellam's holy spear,  
 Reputed to be red with sinless blood,  
 Redden'd at once with sinful, for the point  
 Across the maiden shield of Balan prick'd  
 The hauberk to the flesh; and Balin's horse

Was wearied to the death, and, when they  
 clash'd,  
 Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the man  
 Inward, and either fell, and swoon'd away.

Then to her Squire mutter'd the damsel  
 'Fools!

This fellow hath wrought some foulness  
 with his Queen:

Else never had he borne her crown, nor  
 raved

And thus foam'd over at a rival name:  
 But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast broken  
 shell,

Art yet half-yolk, not even come to down—  
 Who never sawest Caerleon upon Usk—  
 And yet hast often pleaded for my love—  
 See what I see, be thou where I have been,  
 Or else Sir Chick—dismount and loose  
 their casques

I fain would know what manner of men  
 they be.'

And when the Squire had loosed them,  
 'Goodly!—look!

They might have cropt the myriad flower  
 of May,

And butt each other here, like brainless  
 bulls,

Dead for one heifer!'

Then the gentle Squire  
 'I hold them happy, so they died for love:  
 And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like your dog,  
 I too could die, as now I live, for thee.'

'Live on, Sir Boy,' she cried. 'I better  
 prize

The living dog than the dead lion: away!  
 I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead.'

Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen oak,  
 And bounding forward 'Leave them to the  
 wolves.'

But when their foreheads felt the cooling  
 air,

Balin first woke, and seeing that true face,  
 Familiar up from cradle-time, so wan,  
 Crawl'd slowly with low moans to where  
 he lay,

And on his dying brother cast himself  
 Dying; and he lifted faint eyes; he felt

## BALIN AND BALAN

One near him; all at once they found the  
world,  
Staring wild-wide; then with a childlike  
wail,  
And drawing down the dim disastrous  
brow  
'That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it, moan'd  
and spake;

'O Balin, Balin, I that fain had died  
To save thy life, have brought thee to thy  
death.  
Why had ye not the shield I knew? and  
why  
Trampled ye thus on that which bare the  
Crown?'

Then Balin told him brokenly, and in  
gasps,  
All that had chanced, and Balan moan'd  
again.

'Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's hall:  
This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded not.  
And one said "Eat in peace! a liar is he,  
And hates thee for the tribute!" this good  
knight  
'Told me, that twice a wanton damsel came,  
And sought for Garlon at the castle-gates,  
Whom Pellam drove away with holy heat.  
I well believe this damsel, and the one  
Who stood beside thee even now, the  
same.  
"She dwells among the woods" he said  
"and meets  
And dallies with him in the Mouth of  
Hell."  
Foul are their lives; foul are their lips; they  
lied.  
Pure as our own true Mother is our Queen.'

'O brother' answer'd Balin 'woe is me!  
My madness all thy life has been thy doom,  
Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day; and  
now  
The night has come. I scarce can see thee  
now.  
Goodnight! for we shall never bid again  
Goodmorrow—Dark my doom was here,  
and dark  
It will be there. I see thee now no more.

I would not mine again should darken  
thine,  
Goodnight, true brother.'

Balan answer'd low

'Goodnight, true brother here! good-  
morrow there!  
We two were born together, and we die  
Together by one doom:' and while he spoke  
Closed his death-drowsing eyes, and slept  
the sleep  
With Balin, either lock'd in either's arm.

### MERLIN AND VIVIEN

A STORM was coming, but the winds were  
still,  
And in the wild woods of Broccliande,  
Before an oak, so hollow, huge and old  
It look'd a tower of ivied masonwork,  
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

For he that always bare in bitter grudge  
The slights of Arthur and his Table, Mark  
The Cornish King, had heard a wandering  
voice,  
A minstrel of Caerleon by strong storm  
Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say  
That out of naked knightlike purity  
Sir Lancelot worship't no unmarried girl  
But the great Queen herself, fought in her  
name,  
Sware by her—vows like theirs, that high  
in heaven  
Love most, but neither marry, nor are  
given  
In marriage, angels of our Lord's report.

He ceased, and then—for Vivien sweetly  
said  
(She sat beside the banquet nearest Mark),  
'And is the fair example follow'd, Sir,  
In Arthur's household?'—answer'd inno-  
cently:

'Ay, by some few—ay, truly—youths  
that hold  
It more beseems the perfect virgin knight  
To worship woman as true wife beyond  
All hopes of gaining, than as maiden girl.  
They place their pride in Lancelot and the  
Queen.



## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

So passionate for an utter purity  
Beyond the limit of their bond, are these,  
For Arthur bound them not to singleness.  
Brave hearts and clean! and yet—God guide  
them—young.’

Then Mark was half in heart to hurl his  
cup  
Straight at the speaker, but forbore: he  
rose  
To leave the hall, and, Vivien following  
him,  
Turn’d to her: ‘Here are snakes within the  
grass;  
And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye fear  
The monkish manhood, and the mask of pure  
Worn by this court, can stir them till they  
sting.’

And Vivien answer’d, smiling scorn-  
fully,  
‘Why fear? because that foster’d at *thy*  
court  
I savour of thy—virtues? fear them? no.  
As Love, if Love be perfect, casts out fear,  
So Hate, if Hate be perfect, casts out fear.  
My father died in battle against the King,  
My mother on his corpse in open field;  
She bore me there, for born from death  
was I  
Among the dead and sown upon the  
wind—  
And then on thee! and shown the truth  
betimes,  
That old true filth, and bottom of the well,  
Where Truth is hidden. Gracious lessons  
thine  
And maxims of the mud! “This Arthur  
pure!  
Great Nature thro’ the flesh herself hath  
made  
Gives him the lie! There is no being pure,  
My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the  
same?”—  
If I were Arthur, I would have thy blood.  
Thy blessing, stainless King! I bring thee  
back,  
When I have ferreted out their burrowings,  
The hearts of all this Order in mine hand—  
Ay—so that fate and craft and folly close,

Perchance, one curl of Arthur’s golden  
beard.

To me this narrow grizzled fork of thine  
Is cleaner-fashion’d—Well, I loved thee  
first,  
That warps the wit.’

Loud laugh’d the graceless Mark.  
But Vivien, into Camelot stealing, lodged  
Low in the city, and on a festal day  
When Guinevere was crossing the great  
hall  
Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen, and  
wail’d.

‘Why kneel ye there? What evil have ye  
wrought?  
Rise!’ and the damsel bidden rise arose  
And stood with folded hands and down-  
ward eyes  
Of glancing corner, and all meekly said,  
‘None wrought, but suffer’d much, an  
orphan maid!  
My father died in battle for thy King,  
My mother on his corpse—in open field,  
The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyonsse—  
Poor wretch—no friend!—and now by  
Mark the King  
For that small charm of feature mine, pur-  
sued—  
If any such be mine—I fly to thee.  
Save, save me thou—Woman of women—  
thine  
The wreath of beauty, thine the crown of  
power,  
Be thine the balm of pity, O Heaven’s own  
white  
Earth-angel, stainless bride of stainless  
King—  
Help, for he follows! take me to thyself!  
O yield me shelter for mine innocency  
Among thy maidens!’

Here her slow sweet eyes  
Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful, rose  
Fixt on her hearer’s, while the Queen who  
stood  
All glittering like May sunshine on May  
leaves  
In green and gold, and plumed with green  
replied,

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

'Peace, child! of overpraise and overblame  
We choose the last. Our noble Arthur, him  
Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear and know.  
Nay—we believe all evil of thy Mark—  
Well, we shall test thee farther; but this  
hour  
We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.  
He hath given us a fair falcon which he  
train'd;  
We go to prove it. Bide ye here the while.'

She past; and Vivien murmur'd after  
'Go!  
I bide the while.' Then thro' the portal-  
arch  
Peering askance, and muttering broken-  
wise,  
As one that labours with an evil dream,  
Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to  
horse.

'Is that the Lancelot? goodly—ay, but  
gaunt:  
Courteous—amends for gauntness—takes  
her hand—  
That glance of theirs, but for the street,  
had been  
A clinging kiss—how hand lingers in hand!  
Let go at last!—thy ride away—to hawk  
For waterfowl. Royaller game is mine.  
For such a supersensual sensual bond  
As that gray cricket chirpt of at our  
hearth—  
Touch flax with flame—a glance will serve  
—the liars!  
Ah little rat that borest in the dyke  
Thy hole by night to let the boundless deep  
Down upon far-off cities while they  
dance—  
Or dream—of thee they dream'd not—nor  
of me  
These—ay, but each of either: ride, and  
dream  
The mortal dream that never yet was  
mine—  
Ride, ride and dream until ye wake—to me!  
Then, narrow court and lubber King, fare-  
well!  
For Lancelot will be gracious to the rat,  
And our wise Queen, if knowing that I  
know,

Will hate, loathe, fear—but honour me the  
more.'

Yet while they rode together down the  
plain,  
Their talk was all of training, terms of art,  
Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and lure.  
'She is too noble' he said 'to check at pies,  
Nor will she rake: there is no baseness in  
her.'  
Here when the Queen demanded as by  
chance  
'Know ye the stranger woman?' 'Let her  
be,'  
Said Lancelot and unhooded casting off  
The goodly falcon free; she tower'd; her  
bells,  
Tone under tone, shrill'd; and they lifted  
up  
Their eager faces, wondering at the  
strength,  
Boldness and royal knighthood of the bird  
Who pounced her quarry and slew it.  
Many a time  
As once—of old—among the flowers—  
they rode.

But Vivien half-forgotten of the Queen  
Among her damsels brooding sat, heard,  
watch'd  
And whisper'd: thro' the peaceful court  
she crept  
And whisper'd: then as Arthur in the  
highest  
Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the  
lowest,  
Arriving at a time of golden rest,  
And sowing one ill hint from ear to ear,  
While all the heathen lay at Arthur's feet,  
And no quest came, but all was joust and  
play,  
Leaven'd his hall. They heard and let  
her be.

Therafter as an enemy that has left  
Death in the living waters, and withdrawn,  
The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's court.

She hated all the knights, and heard in  
thought  
Their lavish comment when her name was  
named.

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

For once, when Arthur walking all alone,  
Vext at a rumour issued from herself  
Of some corruption crept among his  
knights,  
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted fair,  
Would fain have wrought upon his cloudy  
mood

With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken  
voice,  
And flutter'd adoration, and at last  
With dark sweet hints of some who prized  
him more  
Than who should prize him most; at which  
the King  
Had gazed upon her blankly and gone by:  
But one had watch'd, and had not held his  
peace:

It made the laughter of an afternoon  
That Vivien should attempt the blameless  
King.

And after that, she set herself to gain  
Him, the most famous man of all those  
times,

Merlin, who knew the range of all their  
arts,  
Had built the King his havens, ships, and  
halls,

Was also Bard, and knew the starry  
heavens;

The people call'd him Wizard; whom at  
first

She play'd about with slight and sprightly  
talk,

And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd  
points

Of slander, glancing here and grazing  
there;

And yielding to his kindlier moods, the  
Seer

Would watch her at her petulance, and  
play,

Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable, and  
laugh

As those that watch a kitten; thus he grew  
Tolerant of what he half disdain'd, and she,  
Perceiving that she was but half disdain'd,  
Began to break her sports with graver fits,  
Turn red or pale, would often when they  
met

Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
With such a fixt devotion, that the old man,

Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at  
times

Would flatter his own wish in age for love,  
And half believe her true: for thus at times  
He waver'd; but that other clung to him,  
Fixt in her will, and so the seasons went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melancholy;  
He walk'd with dreams and darkness, and  
he found

A doom that ever poised itself to fall,  
An ever-moaning battle in the mist,  
World-war of dying flesh against the life,  
Death in all life and lying in all love,  
The meanest having power upon the  
highest,  
And the high purpose broken by the worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd the  
beach;

There found a little boat, and stept into it;  
And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd her  
not.

She took the helm and he the sail; the boat  
Drave with a sudden wind across the deeps,  
And touching Breton sands, they dis-  
embark'd.

And then she follow'd Merlin all the way,  
Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.

For Merlin once had told her of a charm,  
The which if any wrought on anyone  
With woven paces and with waving arms,  
The man so wrought on ever seem'd to lie  
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,  
From which was no escape for evermore;  
And none could find that man for ever-  
more,

Nor could he see but him who wrought  
the charm

Coming and going, and he lay as dead  
And lost to life and use and name and  
fame.

And Vivien ever sought to work the charm  
Upon the great Enchanter of the Time,  
As fancying that her glory would be great  
According to his greatness whom she  
quench'd.

There lay she all her length and kiss'd  
his feet,

As if in deepest reverence and in love.

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

A twist of gold was round her hair; a robe  
Of samite without price, that more exprest  
Than hid her, clung about her lissome  
limbs,

In colour like the satin-shining palm  
On fallows in the windy gleams of March:  
And while she kiss'd them, crying,

'Trample me,  
Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro' the  
world,

And I will pay you worship; tread me  
down

And I will kiss you for it;' he was mute:  
So dark a forethought roll'd about his  
brain,

As on a dull day in an Ocean cave  
The blind wave feeling round his long sea-  
hall

In silence: wherefore, when she lifted up  
A face of sad appeal, and spake and said,  
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and again,  
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and once more,  
'Great Master, do ye love me?' he was  
mute.

And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,  
Writhed toward him, slidged up his knee  
and sat,

Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet  
Together, curved an arm about his neck,  
Clung like a snake; and letting her left  
hand

Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a leaf,  
Made with her right a comb of pearl to  
part

The lists of such a beard as youth gone out  
Had left in ashes: then he spoke and said,  
Not looking at her, 'Who are wise in love  
Love most, say least,' and Vivien answer'd  
quick,

'I saw the little elf-god eyeless once  
In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot:  
But neither eyes nor tongue—O stupid  
child!

Yet you are wise who say it; let me think  
Silence is wisdom: I am silent then,  
And ask no kiss;' then adding all at once,  
'And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,'  
drew

The vast and shaggy mantle of his beard  
Across her neck and bosom to her knee,  
And call'd herself a gilded summer fly

Caught in a great old tyrant spider's web,  
Who meant to eat her up in that wild wood  
Without one word. So Vivien call'd herself,  
But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star  
Veil'd in gray vapour; till he sadly smiled:  
'To what request for what strange boon,'  
he said,

'Are these your pretty tricks and fooleries,  
O Vivien, the preamble? yet my thanks,  
For these have broken up my melancholy.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily,  
'What, O my Master, have ye found your  
voice?

I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks at last!  
But yesterday you never open'd lip,  
Except indeed to drink: no cup had we:  
In mine own lady palms I cull'd the spring  
That gather'd trickling dropwise from the  
cleft,

And made a pretty cup of both my hands  
And offer'd you it kneeling: then you drank  
And knew no more, nor gave me one poor  
word;

O no more thanks than might a goat have  
given

With no more sign of reverence than a  
beard.

And when we halted at that other well,  
And I was faint to swooning, and you lay  
Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of those  
Deep meadows we had traversed, did you  
know

That Vivien bathed your feet before her  
own?

And yet no thanks: and all thro' this wild  
wood

And all this morning when I fondled you:  
Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not so  
strange—

How had I wrong'd you? surely ye are  
wise,

But such a silence is more wise than kind.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and  
said:

'O did ye never lie upon the shore,  
And watch the curl'd white of the coming  
wave

Glass'd in the slippery sand before it  
breaks?

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasurable,  
 Dark in the glass of some presageful mood,  
 Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.  
 And then I rose and fled from Arthur's  
 court  
 To break the mood. You follow'd me un-  
 ask'd;  
 And when I look'd, and saw you following  
 still,  
 My mind involved yourself the nearest  
 thing  
 In that mind-mist: for shall I tell you  
 truth?  
 You seem'd that wave about to break upon  
 me  
 And sweep me from my hold upon the  
 world,  
 My use and name and fame. Your pardon,  
 child.  
 Your pretty sports have brighten'd all  
 again.  
 And ask your boon, for boon I owe you  
 thrice,  
 Once for wrong done you by confusion,  
 next  
 For thanks it seems till now neglected, last  
 For these your dainty gambols: wherefore  
 ask;  
 And take this boon so strange and not so  
 strange.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mourn-  
 fully:  
 'O not so strange as my long asking it,  
 Not yet so strange as you yourself are  
 strange,  
 Nor half so strange as that dark mood of  
 yours.  
 I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine;  
 And see, yourself have own'd ye did me  
 wrong.  
 The people call you prophet: let it be:  
 Be not of those that can expound them-  
 selves.  
 Take Vivien for expounder; she will call  
 That three-days-long presageful gloom of  
 yours  
 No presage, but the same mistrustful mood  
 That makes you seem less noble than your-  
 self,  
 Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,

Now ask'd again: for see you not, dear love,  
 That such a mood as that, which lately  
 gloom'd  
 Your fancy when ye saw me following you,  
 Must make me fear still more you are not  
 mine,  
 Must make me yearn still more to prove  
 you mine,  
 And make me wish still more to learn this  
 charm  
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
 As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it me.  
 The charm so taught will charm us both  
 to rest.  
 For, grant me some slight power upon  
 your fate,  
 I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,  
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing you  
 mine.  
 And therefore be as great as ye are named,  
 Not muffled round with selfish reticence.  
 How hard you look and how denyingly!  
 O, if you think this wickedness in me,  
 That I should prove it on you unawares,  
 That makes me passing wrathful; then our  
 bond  
 Had best be loosed for ever: but think or  
 not,  
 By Heaven that hears I tell you the clean  
 truth,  
 As clean as blood of babes, as white as  
 milk:  
 O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,  
 If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,  
 Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a dream,  
 Have tript on such conjectural treachery—  
 May this hard earth cleave to the Nadir  
 hell  
 Down, down, and close again, and nip me  
 flat,  
 If I be such a traitress. Yield my boon,  
 Till which I scarce can yield you all I am;  
 And grant my re-reiterated wish,  
 The great proof of your love: because I  
 think,  
 However wise, ye hardly know me yet.'

And Merlin loosed his hand from hers  
 and said,  
 'I never was less wise, however wise,  
 Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of trust,

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

Than when I told you first of such a charm.

Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,  
Too much I trusted when I told you that,  
And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd  
man

Thro' woman the first hour; for howsoc'er  
In children a great curiousness be well,  
Who have to learn themselves and all the  
world,

In you, that are no child, for still I find  
Your face is practised when I spell the  
lines,

I call it,—well I will not call it vice:  
But since you name yourself the summer  
fly,

I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat,  
That settles, beaten back, and beaten back  
Settles, till one could yield for weariness:  
But since I will not yield to give you power  
Upon my life and use and name and fame,  
Why will ye never ask some other boon?  
Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too  
much.'

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted  
maid

That ever bided tryst at village stile,  
Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears:  
'Nay, Master, be not wrathful with your  
maid;

Caress her: let her feel herself forgiven  
Who feels no heart to ask another boon.  
I think ye hardly know the tender rhyme  
Of "trust me not at all or all in all."  
I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it once,  
And it shall answer for me. Listen to it.

"In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be  
ours,  
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal  
powers:  
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

"It is the little rift within the lute,  
That by and by will make the music mute,  
And ever widening slowly silence all.

"The little rift within the lover's lute  
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,  
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

"It is not worth the keeping: let it go:  
But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.  
And trust me not at all or all in all."

O Master, do ye love my tender rhyme?'

And Merlin look'd and half believed her  
true,  
So tender was her voice, so fair her face,  
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her  
tears

Like sunlight on the plain behind a shower:  
And yet he answer'd half indignantly:

'Far other was the song that once I  
heard

By this huge oak, sung nearly where we sit:  
For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,  
To chase a creature that was current then  
In these wild woods, the hart with golden  
horns.

It was the time when first the question rose  
About the founding of a Table Round,  
That was to be, for love of God and men  
And noble deeds, the flower of all the  
world.

And each incited each to noble deeds.  
And while we waited, one, the youngest  
of us,

We could not keep him silent, out he  
flash'd,

And into such a song, such fire for fame,  
Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down  
To such a stern and iron-clashing close,  
That when he stopt we long'd to hurl  
together,

And should have done it; but the beau-  
teous beast

Scared by the noise upstart at our feet,  
And like a silver shadow slipt away  
'Thro' the dim land; and all day long we  
rode

Thro' the dim land against a rushing wind,  
That glorious rounded echoing in our ears,  
And chased the flashes of his golden horns  
Until they vanish'd by the fairy well  
That laughs at iron—as our warriors did—  
Where children cast their pins and nails,  
and cry,

"Laugh, little well!" but touch it with a  
sword,

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

It buzzes fiercely round the point; and there  
We lost him: such a noble song was that.  
But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet rhyme,  
I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,  
Were proving it on me, and that I lay  
And felt them slowly ebbing, name and fame.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully:

'O mine have ebb'd away for evermore,  
And all thro' following you to this wild wood,  
Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.  
Lo now, what hearts have men! they never mount  
As high as woman in her selfless mood.  
And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn my song,  
Take one verse more—the lady speaks it—this:

“My name, once mine, now thine, is closelier mine,  
For fame, could fame be mine, that fame were thine,  
And shame, could shame be thine, that shame were mine.  
So trust me not at all or all in all.”

‘Says she not well? and there is more—this rhyme  
Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the Queen,  
That burst in dancing, and the pearls were spilt;  
Some lost, some stolen, some as relics kept.  
But nevermore the same two sister pearls  
Ran down the silken thread to kiss each other  
On her white neck—so is it with this rhyme:  
It lives dispersedly in many hands,  
And every minstrel sings it differently;  
Yet is there one true line, the pearl of pearls:  
“Man dreams of Fame while woman wakes to love.”  
Yea! Love, tho' Love were of the grossest, carves

A portion from the solid present, eats  
And uses, careless of the rest; but Fame,  
The Fame that follows death is nothing to us;  
And what is Fame in life but half-disfame,  
And counterchanged with darkness? ye yourself  
Know well that Envy calls you Devil's son,  
And since ye seem the Master of all Art,  
They fain would make you Master of all vice.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and said,

'I once was looking for a magic weed,  
And found a fair young squire who sat alone,  
Had carved himself a knightly shield of wood,  
And then was painting on it fancied arms,  
Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun  
In dexter chief; the scroll “I follow fame.”  
And speaking not, but leaning over him,  
I took his brush and blotted out the bird,  
And made a Gardener putting in a graff,  
With this for motto, “Rather use than fame.”

You should have seen him blush; but afterwards

He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,  
For you, methinks you think you love me well;

For me, I love you somewhat; rest: and Love

Should have some rest and pleasure in himself,

Not ever be too curious for a boon,  
Too prurient for a proof against the grain  
Of him ye say ye love: but Fame with men,  
Being but ampler means to serve mankind,  
Should have small rest or pleasure in herself,

But work as vassal to the larger love,  
That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.  
Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame again  
Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my boon!

What other? for men sought to prove me vile,

Because I fain had given them greater wits:  
And then did Envy call me Devil's son:

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

The sick weak beast seeking to help herself  
By striking at her better, miss'd, and  
brought

Her own claw back, and wounded her own  
heart.

Sweet were the days when I was all un-  
known,

But when my name was lifted up, the  
storm

Brake on the mountain and I cared not for it.  
Right well know I that Fame is half-  
disfame,

Yet needs must work my work. That other  
fame,

To one at least, who hath not children,  
vague,

The cackle of the unborn about the grave,  
I cared not for it: a single misty star,

Which is the second in a line of stars  
That seem a sword beneath a belt of threee,

I never gazed upon it but I dreamt  
Of some vast charm concluded in that star

To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if I  
fear,

Giving you power upon me thro' this  
charm,

That you might play me falsely, having  
power,

However well ye think ye love me now  
(As sons of kings loving in pupillage

Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to  
power)

I rather dread the loss of use than fame;  
If you—and not so much from wickedness,

As some wild turn of anger, or a mood  
Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,

To keep me all to your own self,—or else  
A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,—

Should try this charm on whom ye say ye  
love.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in  
wrath:

'Have I not sworn? I am not trusted.  
Good!

Well, hide it, hide it; I shall find it out;  
And being found take heed of Vivien.

A woman and not trusted, doubtless I  
Might feel some sudden turn of anger born

Of your misfaith; and your fine epithet  
Is accurate too, for this full love of mine

Without the full heart back may merit well  
Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,  
My daily wonder is, I love at all.

And as to woman's jealousy, O why not?  
O to what end, except a jealous one,

And one to make me jealous if I love,  
Was this fair charm invented by yourself?

I well believe that all about this world  
Ye cage a buxom captive here and there,

Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower  
From which is no escape for evermore.'

Then the great Master merrily answer'd  
her:

'Full many a love in loving youth was  
mine;

I needed then no charm to keep them mine  
But youth and love; and that full heart of

yours  
Whereof ye prattle, may now assure you

mine;  
So live uncharm'd. For those who wrought

it first,  
The wrist is parted from the hand that

waved,  
The feet unmortised from their ankle-

bones  
Who paced it, ages back: but will ye hear

The legend as in guerdon for your rhyme?

'There lived a king in the most Eastern  
East,

Less old than I, yet older, for my blood  
Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.

A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,  
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty name-

less isles;  
And passing one, at the high peep of dawn,

He saw two cities in a thousand boats  
All fighting for a woman on the sea.

And pushing his black craft among them  
all,

He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought  
her off,

With loss of half his people arrow-slain;  
A maid so smooth, so white, so wonderful,

They said a light came from her when she  
moved:

And since the pirate would not yield her  
up,

The King impaled him for his piracy;



## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

Then made her Queen: but those isle-nurtured eyes  
 Waged such unwilling tho' successful war  
 On all the youth, they sicken'd; councils  
 thinn'd,  
 And armies waned, for magnet-like she  
 drew  
 The rustiest iron of old fighters' hearts;  
 And beasts themselves would worship;  
 camels knelt  
 Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain back  
 That carry kings in castles, bow'd black  
 knees  
 Of homage, ringing with their serpent  
 hands,  
 To make her smile, her golden ankle-bells.  
 What wonder, being jealous, that he sent  
 His horns of proclamation out thro' all  
 The hundred under-kingdoms that he  
 sway'd  
 To find a wizard who might teach the King  
 Some charm, which being wrought upon  
 the Queen  
 Might keep her all his own: to such a one  
 He promised more than ever king has  
 given,  
 A league of mountain full of golden mines,  
 A province with a hundred miles of coast,  
 A palace and a princess, all for him:  
 But on all those who tried and fail'd, the  
 King  
 Pronounced a dismal sentence, meaning  
 by it  
 To keep the list low and pretenders back,  
 Or like a king, not to be trifled with—  
 Their heads should moulder on the city  
 gates.  
 And many tried and fail'd, because the  
 charm  
 Of nature in her overbore their own:  
 And many a wizard brow bleach'd on the  
 walls:  
 And many weeks a troop of carrion crows  
 Hung like a cloud above the gateway  
 towers.'

And Vivien breaking in upon him, said:  
 'I sit and gather honey; yet, methinks  
 Thy tongue has tript a little: ask thy-  
 self,  
 The lady never made *unwilling* war

With those fine eyes: she had her pleasure  
 in it,  
 And made her good man jealous with good  
 cause.  
 And lived there neither dame nor damsel  
 then  
 Wroth at a lover's loss? were all as tame,  
 I mean, as noble, as their Queen was fair?  
 Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,  
 Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,  
 Or make her paler with a poison'd rose?  
 Well, those were not our days: but did  
 they find  
 A wizard? Tell me, was he like to thee?'

She ceased, and made her lithe arm  
 round his neck  
 Tighten, and then drew back, and let her  
 eyes  
 Speak for her, glowing on him, like a bride's  
 On her new lord, her own, the first of men.

He answer'd laughing, 'Nay, not like  
 to me.  
 At last they found—his foragers for  
 charms—  
 A little glassy-headed hairless man,  
 Who lived alone in a great wild on grass;  
 Read but one book, and ever reading grew  
 So grated down and filed away with  
 thought,  
 So lean his eyes were monstrous; while  
 the skin  
 Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and  
 spine.  
 And since he kept his mind on one sole  
 aim,  
 Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted  
 flesh,  
 Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall  
 That sunders ghosts and shadow-casting  
 men  
 Became a crystal, and he saw them thro' it,  
 And heard their voices talk behind the  
 wall,  
 And learnt their elemental secrets, powers  
 And forces; often o'er the sun's bright eye  
 Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,  
 And lash'd it at the base with slanting  
 storm;  
 Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

When the lake whiten'd and the pinewood  
 roar'd,  
 And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow,  
 sunn'd  
 The world to peace again: here was the  
 man.  
 And so by force they dragg'd him to the  
 King.  
 And then he taught the King to charm the  
 Queen  
 In such-wise, that no man could see her  
 more,  
 Nor saw she save the King, who wrought  
 the charm,  
 Coming and going, and she lay as dead,  
 And lost all use of life: but when the King  
 Made proffer of the league of golden mines,  
 The province with a hundred miles of coast,  
 The palace and the princess, that old man  
 Went back to his old wild, and lived on  
 grass,  
 And vanish'd, and his book came down  
 to me.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily:  
 'Ye have the book: the charm is written  
 in it:  
 Good: take my counsel: let me know it at  
 once:  
 For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,  
 With each chest lock'd and padlock'd  
 thirty-fold,  
 And whelm all this beneath as vast a  
 mound  
 As after furious battle turfs the slain  
 On some wild down above the windy deep,  
 I yet should strike upon a sudden means  
 To dig, pick, open, find and read the  
 charm:  
 Then, if I tried it, who should blame me  
 then?'

And smiling as a master smiles at one  
 That is not of his school, nor any school  
 But that where blind and naked Ignorance  
 Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,  
 On all things all day long, he answer'd her:

'Thou read the book, my pretty Vivien!  
 O ay, it is but twenty pages long,  
 But every page having an ample marge,

And every marge enclosing in the midst  
 A square of text that looks a little blot,  
 The text no larger than the limbs of fleas;  
 And every square of text an awful charm,  
 Writ in a language that has long gone by.  
 So long, that mountains have arisen since  
 With cities on their flanks—thou read the  
 book!

And every margin scribbled, crost, and  
 cramm'd  
 With comment, densest condensation, hard  
 To mind and eye; but the long sleepless  
 nights  
 Of my long life have made it easy to me.  
 And none can read the text, not even I;  
 And none can read the comment but  
 myself;  
 And in the comment did I find the charm.  
 O, the results are simple; a mere child  
 Might use it to the harm of anyone,  
 And never could undo it: ask no more:  
 For tho' you should not prove it upon me,  
 But keep that oath ye sware, ye might,  
 perchance,  
 Assay it on some one of the Table Round,  
 And all because ye dream they babble of  
 you.'

And Vivien, frowning in true anger,  
 said:  
 'What dare the full-fed liars say of me?  
 They ride abroad redressing human  
 wrongs!  
 They sit with knife in meat and wine in  
 horn!  
 They bound to holy vows of chastity!  
 Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.  
 But you are man, you well can under-  
 stand  
 The shame that cannot be explain'd for  
 shame.  
 Not one of all the drove should touch me:  
 swine!'

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her  
 words:  
 'You breathe but accusation vast and  
 vague,  
 Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If ye  
 know,  
 Set up the charge ye know, to stand or fall!'

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrath-  
fully:  
'O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him  
Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his  
wife  
And two fair babes, and went to distant  
lands;  
Was one year gone, and on returning found  
Not two but three? there lay the reckling,  
one  
But one hour old! What said the happy  
sire?  
A seven-months' babe had been a truer  
gift.  
Those twelve sweet moons confused his  
fatherhood.'

Then answer'd Merlin, 'Nay, I know  
the tale.  
Sir Valence wedded with an outland dame:  
Some cause had kept him sunder'd from  
his wife:  
One child they had: it lived with her: she  
died:  
His kinsman travelling on his own affair  
Was charged by Valence to bring home  
the child.  
He brought, not found it therefore: take  
the truth.'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'overtrue a tale.  
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagramore,  
That ardent man? "to pluck the flower in  
season,"  
So says the song, "I trow it is no treason."  
O Master, shall we call him overquick  
To crop his own sweet rose before the  
hour?'

And Merlin answer'd, 'Overquick art  
thou  
To catch a loathly plume fall'n from the  
wing  
Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole  
prey  
Is man's good name: he never wrong'd his  
bride.  
I know the tale. An angry gust of wind  
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-  
room'd  
And many-corridor'd complexities

Of Arthur's palace: then he found a door,  
And darkling felt the sculptured ornament  
That wreathen round it made it seem his  
own;  
And wearied out made for the couch and  
slept,  
A stainless man beside a stainless maid;  
And either slept, nor knew of other there;  
Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose  
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely  
down,  
Blushing upon them blushing, and at once  
He rose without a word and parted from  
her:  
But when the thing was blazed about the  
court,  
The brute world howling forced them into  
bonds,  
And as it chanced they are happy, being  
pure.'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'that were likely too.  
What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale  
And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,  
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of  
Christ,  
Or some black wether of St. Satan's fold.  
What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,  
Among the knightly brasses of the graves,  
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the dead!'

And Merlin answer'd careless of her  
charge,  
'A sober man is Percivale and pure;  
But once in life was fluster'd with new  
wine,  
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-  
yard;  
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught  
And meant to stamp him with her master's  
mark;  
And that he sinn'd is not believable;  
For, look upon his face!—but if he sinn'd,  
The sin that practice burns into the blood,  
And not the one dark hour which brings  
remorse,  
Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be:  
Or else were he, the holy king, whose hymns  
Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.  
But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye  
more?'

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in  
wrath:  
'O ay; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend  
'Traitor or true? that commerce with the  
Queen,  
I ask you, is it clamour'd by the child,  
Or whisper'd in the corner? do ye know it?'

To which he answer'd sadly, 'Yea, I  
know it.  
Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,  
To fetch her, and she watch'd him from  
her walls.  
A rumour runs, she took him for the King,  
So fixt her fancy on him: let them be.  
But have ye no one word of loyal praise  
For Arthur, blameless King and stainless  
man?'

She answer'd with a low and chuckling  
laugh:  
'Man! is he man at all, who knows and  
winks?  
Sees what his fair bride is and does, and  
winks?  
By which the good King means to blind  
himself,  
And blinds himself and all the Table  
Round  
To all the foulness that they work. Myself  
Could call him (were it not for woman-  
hood)  
The pretty, popular name such manhood  
earns,  
Could call him the main cause of all their  
crime;  
Yea, were he not crown'd King, coward,  
and fool.'

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing,  
said:  
'O true and tender! O my liege and King!  
O selfless man and stainless gentleman,  
Who wouldst against thine own eye-wit-  
ness fain  
Have all men true and leal, all women  
pure;  
How, in the mouths of base interpreters,  
From over-fineness not intelligible  
To things with every sense as false and  
foul

As the poach'd filth that floods the middle  
street,  
Is thy white blamelessness accounted  
blame!'

But Vivien, deeming Merlin overborne  
By instance, recommenced, and let her  
tongue

Rage like a fire among the noblest names,  
Polluting, and imputing her whole self,  
Defaming and defacing, till she left  
Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad  
clean.

Her words had issue other than she  
will'd.

He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down, and  
made

A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes,  
And mutter'd in himself, 'Tell *her* the  
charm!

So, if she had it, would she rail on me  
To snare the next, and if she have it not  
So will she rail. What did the wanton say?  
"Not mount as high;" we scarce can sink  
as low:

For men at most differ as Heaven and  
earth,  
But women, worst and best, as Heaven and  
Hell.

I know the Table Round, my friends of  
old;

All brave, and many generous, and some  
chaste.

She cloaks the scar of some repulse with  
lies;

I well believe she tempted them and fail'd,  
Being so bitter: for fine plots may fail,  
Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as face  
With colours of the heart that are not  
theirs.

I will not let her know: nine tithes of times  
Face-flatterer and backbiter are the same.  
And they, sweet soul, that most impute a  
crime

Are pronest to it, and impute themselves,  
Wanting the mental range; or low desire  
Not to feel lowest makes them level all;  
Yea, they would pare the mountain to the  
plain,

To leave an equal baseness; and in this

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

Are harlots like the crowd, that if they find  
Some stain or blemish in a name of note,  
Not grieving that their greatest are so  
small,

Inflate themselves with some insane delight,  
And judge all nature from her feet of clay,  
Without the will to lift their eyes, and see  
Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual  
fire,  
And touching other worlds. I am weary of  
her.'

He spoke in words part heard, in  
whispers part,  
Half-suffocated in the hoary fell  
And many-winter'd fleece of throat and  
chin.

But Vivien, gathering somewhat of his  
mood,  
And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd twice or  
thrice,  
Leapt from her session on his lap, and  
stood

Stiff as a viper frozen; loathesome sight,  
How from the rosy lips of life and love,  
Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of  
death!

White was her cheek; sharp breaths of  
anger puff'd

Her fairy nostril out; her hand half-  
clench'd

Went faltering sideways downward to her  
belt,

And feeling; had she found a dagger there  
(For in a wink the false love turns to hate)  
She would have stabb'd him; but she  
found it not:

His eye was calm, and suddenly she took  
To bitter weeping like a beaten child,  
A long, long weeping, not consolable.  
Then her false voice made way, broken  
with sobs:

'O crueller than was ever told in tale,  
Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd love!  
O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange,  
Or seeming shameful—for what shame in  
love,

So love be true, and not as yours is—  
nothing

Poor Vivien had not done to win his trust

Who call'd her what he call'd her—all her  
crime,  
All—all—the wish to prove him wholly  
hers.'

She mused a little, and then clapt her  
hands

Together with a wailing shriek, and said:  
'Stabb'd through the heart's affections to  
the heart!

Seethed like the kid in its own mother's  
milk!

Kill'd with a word worse than a life of  
blows!

I thought that he was gentle, being great:  
O God, that I had loved a smaller man!

I should have found in him a greater heart.

O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw  
The knights, the court, the King, dark in  
your light,

Who loved to make men darker than they  
are,

Because of that high pleasure which I had  
To seat you sole upon my pedestal

Of worship—I am answer'd, and hence-  
forth

The course of life that seem'd so flowery  
to me

With you for guide and master, only you,  
Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken  
short,

And ending in a ruin—nothing left,  
But into some low cave to crawl, and there,  
If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,  
Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness.'

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung  
her head,

The snake of gold slid from her hair, the  
braid

Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,  
And the dark wood grew darker toward the  
storm

In silence, while his anger slowly died  
Within him, till he let his wisdom go  
For ease of heart, and half believed her  
true:

Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,  
'Come from the storm,' and having no  
reply,

Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and the face

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame;  
Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching  
terms,

To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in vain.  
At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,  
And as the cageling newly flown returns,  
The seeming-injured simple-hearted thing  
Came to her old perch back, and settled  
there.

There while she sat, half-falling from his  
knees,

Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw  
The slow tear creep from her closed eye-  
lid yet,

About her, more in kindness than in love,  
The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.

But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,  
Her arms upon her breast across, and  
stood,

A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,  
Upright and flush'd before him: then she  
said:

'There must be now no passages of love  
Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore;  
Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,  
What should be granted which your own  
gross heart

Would reckon worth the taking? I will go.  
In truth, but one thing now—better have  
died

Thrice than have ask'd it once—could  
make me stay—

That proof of trust—so often ask'd in vain!  
How justly, after that vile term of yours,  
I find with grief! I might believe you then,  
Who knows? once more. Lo! what was  
once to me

Mere matter of the fancy, now hath grown  
The vast necessity of heart and life.

Farewell; think gently of me, for I fear  
My fate or folly, passing gayer youth  
For one so old, must be to love thee still.  
But ere I leave thee let me swear once more  
That if I schemed against thy peace in  
this,

May yon just heaven, that darkens o'er me,  
send

One flash, that, missing all things else, may  
make

My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.'

Scarce had she ceased, when out of  
heaven a bolt

(For now the storm was close above them)  
struck,

Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining  
With darted spikes and splinters of the  
wood

The dark earth round. He raised his eyes  
and saw

The tree that shone white-listed thro' the  
gloom.

But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard her  
oath,

And dazzled by the livid-flickering fork,  
And deafen'd with the stammering cracks  
and claps

That follow'd, flying back and crying out,  
'O Merlin, tho' you do not love me, save,  
Yet save me!' clung to him and hugg'd  
him close;

And call'd him dear protector in her fright,  
Nor yet forgot her practice in her fright,  
But wrought upon his mood and hugg'd  
him close.

The pale blood of the wizard at her touch  
Took gayer colours, like an opal warm'd.  
She blamed herself for telling hearsay tales:  
She shook from fear, and for her fault she  
wept

Of petulancy; she call'd him lord and liege,  
Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,  
Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate  
love

Of her whole life; and ever overhead  
Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten  
branch

Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain  
Above them; and in change of glare and  
gloom

Her eyes and neck glittering went and  
came;

Till now the storm, its burst of passion  
spent,

Moaning and calling out of other lands,  
Had left the ravaged woodland yet once  
more

To peace; and what should not have been  
had been,

For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,  
Had yielded, told her all the charm, and  
slept.

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

Then, in one moment, she put forth the charm  
Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,  
And lost to life and use and name and fame.

Then crying 'I have made his glory mine,'  
And shrieking out 'O fool!' the harlot leapt  
Adown the forest, and the thicket closed  
Behind her, and the forest echo'd 'fool.'

### LANCELOT AND ELAINE

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,  
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,  
High in her chamber up a tower to the east  
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;  
Which first she placed where morning's  
earliest ray  
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;

Then fearing rust or soiled fashion'd for it  
A case of silk, and braided thereupon  
All the devices blazon'd on the shield  
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,  
A border fantasy of branch and flower,  
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.  
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,  
Leaving her household and good father,  
climb'd

That eastern tower, and entering barr'd  
her door,  
Strip'd off the case, and read the naked  
shield,

Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,  
Now made a pretty history to herself  
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,  
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,  
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is  
fresh;

That ten years back; this dealt him at  
Caerlyle;

That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:  
And ah God's mercy, what a stroke was  
there!

And here a thrust that might have kill'd,  
but God

Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his  
enemy down,

And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good  
shield

Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his  
name?

He left it with her, when he rode to tilt  
For the great diamond in the diamond  
jousts,

Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that  
name

Had named them, since a diamond was the  
prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd  
him King,

Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,  
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black  
tarn.

A horror lived about the tarn, and clave  
Like its own mists to all the mountain side:  
For here two brothers, one a king, had met  
And fought together; but their names were  
lost;

And each had slain his brother at a blow;  
And down they fell and made the glen  
abhor'd:

And there they lay till all their bones were  
bleach'd,

And lichen'd into colour with the crags:  
And he, that once was king, had on a crown  
Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.  
And Arthur came, and labouring up the  
pass,

All in a misty moonshine, unawares  
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and  
the skull

Brake from the nape, and from the skull  
the crown

Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims  
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn:  
And down the shingly scaur he plunged,  
and caught,

And set it on his head, and in his heart  
Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise shalt  
be King.'

Thereafter, when a King, he had the  
gems

Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them  
to his knights,

Saying, 'These jewels, whereupon I  
chanced

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's—

For public use: henceforward let there be,  
Once every year, a joust for one of these:  
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn

Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow

In use of arms and manhood, till we drive  
The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land

Hereafter, which God hinder.' Thus he spoke:

And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still

Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,

With purpose to present them to the Queen,

When all were won; but meaning all at once

To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last

And largest, Arthur, holding then his court

Hard on the river nigh the place which now

Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust  
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh  
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere,  
'Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move

To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,' she said,  
'ye know it.'

'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd, 'the great deeds

Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,  
A sight ye love to look on.' And the Queen  
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly  
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.

He thinking that he read her meaning there,

'Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more  
Than many diamonds,' yielded; and a heart

Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen

(However much he yearn'd to make complete

The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)  
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,

'Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,

And lets me from the saddle;' and the King  
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.

No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame!

Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the knights

Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd

Will murmur, "Lo the shameless ones, who take

Their pastime now the trustful King is gone!"

Then Lancelot vexed at having lied in vain:  
'Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,  
My Queen, that summer, when ye loved me first.

Then of the crowd ye took no more account  
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,  
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,

And every voice is nothing. As to knights,  
Them surely can I silence with all ease.

But now my loyal worship is allow'd  
Of all men: many a bard, without offence,  
Has link'd our names together in his lay,  
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,  
The pearl of beauty: and our knights at feast

Have pledged us in this union, while the King

Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?

Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,

Now weary of my service and devoir,  
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh:

'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,

That passionate perfection, my good lord—



## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?  
He never spake word of reproach to me,  
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,  
He cares not for me: only here to-day  
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his  
eyes:

Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with  
him—else

Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,  
And swearing men to vows impossible,  
To make them like himself: but, friend,  
to me

He is all fault who hath no fault at all:  
For who loves me must have a touch of  
earth;

The low sun makes the colour: I am yours,  
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the  
bond.

And therefore hear my words: go to the  
jousts:

The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our  
dream

When sweetest; and the vermin voices here  
May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but  
they sting.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of  
knights:

'And with what face, after my pretext  
made,

Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I  
Before a King who honours his own word,  
As if it were his God's?'

'Yea,' said the Queen,  
'A moral child without the craft to rule,  
Else had he not lost me: but listen to me,  
If I must find you wit: we hear it said  
That men go down before your spear at a  
touch,

But knowing you are Lancelot; your great  
name,

This conquers: hide it therefore; go un-  
known:

Win! by this kiss you will: and our true  
King

Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,  
As all for glory; for to speak him true,  
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he  
seem,

No keener hunter after glory breathes.

He loves it in his knights more than him-  
self:

They prove to him his work: win and  
return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,  
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,  
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,  
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer  
foot,

And there among the solitary downs,  
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;  
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,  
That all in loops and links among the dales  
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the  
towers.

Thither he made, and blew the gateway  
horn.

Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled  
man,

Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.

And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless  
man;

And issuing found the Lord of Astolat  
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir  
Lavaine,

Moving to meet him in the castle court;  
And close behind them slept the lily maid  
Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house  
There was not: some light jest among  
them rose

With laughter dying down as the great  
knight

Approach'd them: then the Lord of  
Astolat:

'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by  
what name

Livest between the lips? for by thy state  
And presence I might guess thee chief of  
those,

After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.  
Him have I seen: the rest, his Table  
Round,

Known as they are, to me they are un-  
known.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of  
knights:

'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and  
known,

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

What I by mere mischance have brought,  
my shield.

But since I go to joust as one unknown  
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,  
Hereafter ye shall know me—and the  
shield—

I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
Blank, or at least with some device not  
mine.'

'Then said the Lord of Astolat, 'Here is  
Torre's:

Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre,  
And so, God wot, his shield is blank  
enough.

His ye can have.' Then added plain Sir  
Torre,

'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it.'  
Here laugh'd the father saying, 'Fie, Sir  
Churl,

Is that an answer for a noble knight?  
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,  
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,  
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an  
hour,

And set it in this damsel's golden hair,  
To make her thrice as wilful as before.'

'Nay, father, nay good father, shame  
me not

Before this noble knight,' said young  
Lavaine,

'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre:  
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go:  
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden  
dreamt

That some one put this diamond in her  
hand,

And that it was too slippery to be held,  
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,  
The castle-well, belike; and then I said  
That if I went and if I fought and won it  
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)  
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.  
But, father, give me leave, an if he will,  
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:  
Win shall I not, but do my best to win:  
Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd Lancelot,  
Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship

O'er these waste downs whereon I lost  
myself,

Then were I glad of you as guide and  
friend:

And you shall win this diamond,—as I  
hear

It is a fair large diamond,—if ye may,  
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.'

'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir  
Torre,

'Such be for queens, and not for simple  
maids.'

Then she, who held her eyes upon the  
ground,

Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,  
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement  
Before the stranger knight, who, looking  
at her,

Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:  
'If what is fair be but for what is fair,  
And only queens are to be counted so,  
Rash were my judgment then, who deem  
this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,  
Not violating the bond of like to like.'

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid  
Elaine,

Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,  
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.

The great and guilty love he bare the  
Queen,

In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his  
time.

Another sinning on such heights with one,  
The flower of all the west and all the world,  
Had been the sleeker for it: but in him  
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose  
And drove him into wastes and solitudes  
For agony, who was yet a living soul.

Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest  
man

That ever among ladies ate in hall,  
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.  
However marr'd, of more than twice her  
years,

Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the  
cheek,

And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her  
eyes

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

And loved him, with that love which was  
her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the  
court,  
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall  
Stept with all grace, and not with half dis-  
dain

Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,  
But kindly man moving among his kind:  
Whom they with meats and vintage of  
their best

And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.  
And much they ask'd of court and Table  
Round,

And ever well and readily answer'd he:  
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guine-  
vere,

Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,  
Heard from the Baron that, ten years  
before,

The heathen caught and reft him of his  
tongue.

'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce  
design

Against my house, and him they caught  
and maim'd;

But I, my sons, and little daughter fled  
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the  
woods

By the great river in a boatman's hut.  
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur  
broke

The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

'O there, great lord, doubtless,' Lavaine  
said, rapt

By all the sweet and sudden passion of  
youth

Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have  
fought.

O tell us—for we live apart—you know  
Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And Lancelot  
spoke

And answer'd him at full, as having been  
With Arthur in the fight which all day  
long

Rang by the white mouth of the violent  
Glem;

And in the four loud battles by the shore  
Of Douglas; that on Bassa; then the war

That thunder'd in and out the gloomy  
skirts

Of Celidon the forest; and again  
By castle Gurnion, where the glorious  
King

Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,  
Carved of one emerald center'd in a sun  
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;  
And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,  
When the strong neighings of the wild  
white Horse

Set every gilded parapet shuddering;  
And up in Agned-Cathregion too,  
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath  
'Treroit,

Where many a heathen fell; 'and on the  
mount

Of Badon I myself beheld the King  
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,  
And all his legions crying Christ and him,  
And break them; and I saw him, after,  
stand

High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume  
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,  
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,  
"They are broken, they are broken!" for  
the King,

However mild he seems at home, nor cares  
For triumph in our mimic wars, the  
jousts—

For if his own knight cast him down, he  
laughs

Saying, his knights are better men than  
he—

Yet in this heathen war the fire of God  
Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives  
No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,  
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,  
'Save your great self, fair lord;' and when  
he fell

From talk of war to traits of pleasantry—  
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind—  
She still took note that when the living  
smile

Died from his lips, across him came a cloud  
Of melancholy severe, from which again,  
Whenever in her hovering to and fro

The lily maid had striven to make him  
cheer,

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness  
Of manners and of nature: and she thought  
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.  
And all night long his face before her lived,  
As when a painter, poring on a face,  
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man  
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,  
The shape and colour of a mind and life,  
Lives for his children, ever at its best  
And fullest; so the face before her lived,  
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full  
Of noble things, and held her from her  
sleep.

Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the  
thought

She needs must bid farewell to sweet  
Lavaine.

First as in fear, step after step, she stole  
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:  
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the  
court,

'This shield, my friend, where is it?' and  
Lavaine

Past inward, as she came from out the  
tower.

There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd,  
and smooth'd

The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.  
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she  
drew

Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more  
amazed

Than if seven men had set upon him, saw  
The maiden standing in the dewy light.

He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.  
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,

For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood  
Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.  
Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,

That he should wear her favour at the tilt.  
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.  
'Fair lord, whose name I know not—noble  
it is,

I well believe, the noblest—will you wear  
My favour at this tourney?' 'Nay,' said he,  
'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn  
Favour of any lady in the lists.

Such is my wont, as those, who know me,  
know.'

'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in wearing  
mine

Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,  
That those who know should know you.'

And he turn'd

Her counsel up and down within his mind,  
And found it true, and answer'd, 'True,  
my child.

Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:  
What is it?' and she told him 'A red sleeve  
Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it:  
then he bound

Her token on his helmet, with a smile  
Saying, 'I never yet have done so much  
For any maiden living,' and the blood  
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with  
delight;

But left her all the paler, when Lavaine  
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd  
shield,

His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,  
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:  
'Do me this grace, my child, to have my  
shield

In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to me,'  
She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am your  
squire!'

Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, 'Lily  
maid,

For fear our people call you lily maid  
In earnest, let me bring your colour back;  
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence  
to bed.'

So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own  
hand,

And thus they moved away: she stay'd a  
minute,

Then made a sudden step to the gate, and  
there—

Her bright hair blown about the serious  
face

Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—  
Paused by the gateway, standing near the  
shield

In silence, while she watch'd their arms  
far-off

Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.  
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took  
the shield,

There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past  
away

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Far o'er the long backs of the bushless  
downs,  
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a  
knight  
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years  
A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and  
pray'd,  
And ever labouring had scoop'd himself  
In the white rock a chapel and a hall  
On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,  
And cells and chambers: all were fair and  
dry;  
The green light from the meadows under-  
neath  
Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;  
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees  
And poplars made a noise of falling  
showers.  
And thither wending there that night they  
bode.

But when the next day broke from  
underground,  
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the  
cave,  
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and  
rode away:  
Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold my  
name  
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the  
Lake,'  
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,  
Dearer to true young hearts than their own  
praise,  
But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it  
indeed?'  
And after muttering 'The great Lancelot,'  
At last he got his breath and answer'd,  
'Once,  
One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,  
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of  
kings,  
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,  
He will be there—then were I stricken blind  
That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd  
the lists  
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes  
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half  
round

Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,  
Until they found the clear-faced King, who  
sat  
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,  
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,  
And down his robe the dragon writhed in  
gold,  
And from the carven-work behind him  
crept  
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make  
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of  
them  
Thro' knots and loops and folds innume-  
rable  
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they  
found  
The new design wherein they lost them-  
selves,  
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work:  
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,  
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless  
king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine  
and said,  
'Me you call great: mine is the firmer seat,  
The truer lance: but there is many a youth  
Now crescent, who will come to all I am  
And overcome it; and in me there dwells  
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch  
Of greatness to know well I am not great:  
'There is the man.' And Lavaine gaped  
upon him  
As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
The trumpets blew; and then did either  
side,  
They that assail'd, and they that held the  
lists,  
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly  
move,  
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously  
Shock, that a man far-off might well per-  
ceive,  
If any man that day were left afield,  
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of  
arms.  
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw  
Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd  
into it  
Against the stronger: little need to speak  
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl,

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Count, baron—whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,  
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,  
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight

Should do and almost overdo the deeds  
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, 'Lo!  
What is he? I do not mean the force alone—

The grace and versatility of the man!  
Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has Lancelot worn

Favour of any lady in the lists?  
Not such his wont, as we, that know him, know.'

'How then? who then?' a fury seized them all,

A fiery family passion for the name  
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.  
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds, and thus,

'Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made

In moving, all together down upon him  
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea,  
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all

Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,

Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,  
And him that helms it, so they overbore  
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear  
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear

Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head

Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt, and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully;

He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,  
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.

He up the side, sweating with agony, got,  
But thought to do while he might yet endure,

And being lustily holpen by the rest,  
His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle  
To those he fought with,—drave his kith and kin,

And all the Table Round that held the lists,  
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets blew  
Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve

Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the knights,

His party, cried 'Advance and take thy prize  
'The diamond;' but he answer'd, 'Diamond me

No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!  
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!  
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field

With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.  
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,

Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the lance-head.'

'Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said Lavaine,

'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'

But he, 'I die already with it: draw—  
Draw,'—and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave

A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,

And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank

For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.

Then came the hermit out and bare him in,  
There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt

Whether to live or die, for many a week  
Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove

Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,

And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,

His party, knights of utmost North and West,

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate  
 isles,  
 Came round their great Pendragon, saying  
 to him,  
 'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won  
 the day,  
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his  
 prize  
 Untaken, crying that his prize is death.'  
 'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that such  
 an one,  
 So great a knight as we have seen to-day—  
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot—  
 Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—  
 He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore,  
 rise,  
 O Gawain, and ride forth and find the  
 knight.  
 Wounded and wearied needs must he be  
 near.  
 I charge you that you get at once to horse.  
 And, knights and kings, there breathes not  
 one of you  
 Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given:  
 His prowess was too wondrous. We will  
 do him  
 No customary honour: since the knight  
 Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,  
 Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take  
 This diamond, and deliver it, and return,  
 And bring us where he is, and how he  
 fares,  
 And cease not from your quest until ye  
 find.'

So saying, from the carven flower above,  
 To which it made a restless heart, he took,  
 And gave, the diamond: then from where  
 he sat  
 At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,  
 With smiling face and frowning heart, a  
 Prince  
 In the mid might and flourish of his May,  
 Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair  
 and strong,  
 And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint  
 And Gareth, a good knight, but there-  
 withal  
 Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot,  
 Nor often loyal to his word, and now

Wroth that the King's command to sally  
 forth  
 In quest of whom he knew not, made him  
 leave  
 The banquet, and concourse of knights  
 and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;  
 While Arthur to the banquet, dark in  
 mood,  
 Past, thinking 'Is it Lancelot who hath  
 come  
 Despite the wound he spake of, all for  
 gain  
 Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,  
 And ridd'n away to die?' So fear'd the  
 King,  
 And, after two days' tarriance there,  
 return'd.  
 Then when he saw the Queen, embracing  
 ask'd,  
 'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay, lord,' she  
 said.  
 'And where is Lancelot?' Then the Queen  
 amazed,  
 'Was he not with you? won he not your  
 prize?'  
 'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why that like  
 was he.'  
 And when the King demanded how she  
 knew,  
 Said, 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted  
 from us,  
 Than Lancelot told me of a common talk  
 That men went down before his spear at a  
 touch,  
 But knowing he was Lancelot; his great  
 name  
 Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide  
 his name  
 From all men, ev'n the King, and to this  
 end  
 Had made the pretext of a hindering  
 wound,  
 That he might joust unknown of all, and  
 learn  
 If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;  
 And added, "Our true Arthur, when he  
 learns,  
 Will well allow my pretext, as for gain  
 Of purer glory.'"

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Then replied the King:  
 'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,  
 In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
 To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.  
 Surely his King and most familiar friend  
 Might well have kept his secret. True,  
 indeed,  
 Albeit I know my knights fantastical,  
 So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
 Must needs have moved my laughter: now  
 remains  
 But little cause for laughter: his own kin—  
 Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him,  
 this!—  
 His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon  
 him;  
 So that he went sore wounded from the  
 field:  
 Yet good news too: for goodly hopes are  
 mine  
 That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.  
 He wore, against his wont, upon his helm  
 A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great  
 pearls,  
 Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Yea, lord,' she said,  
 'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying that, she  
 choked,  
 And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,  
 Past to her chamber, and there flung her-  
 self  
 Down on the great King's couch, and  
 writhed upon it,  
 And clench'd her fingers till they bit the  
 palm,  
 And shriek'd out 'Traitor' to the unhearing  
 wall,  
 Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,  
 And moved about her palace, proud and  
 pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region  
 round  
 Rode with his diamond, wearied of the  
 quest,  
 Touch'd at all points, except the poplar  
 grove,  
 And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:  
 Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the  
 maid

Glanced at, and cried, 'What news from  
 Camelot, lord?  
 What of the knight with the red sleeve?'  
 'He won.'  
 'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted from the  
 jousts  
 Hurt in the side,' whereat she caught her  
 breath;  
 Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance  
 go;  
 Thereon she smote her hand: wellnigh she  
 swoon'd:  
 And, while he gazed wonderingly at her,  
 came  
 The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the  
 Prince  
 Reported who he was, and on what quest  
 Sent, that he bore the prize and could not  
 find  
 The victor, but had ridd'n a random round  
 To seek him, and had wearied of the search.  
 To whom the Lord of Astolat, 'Bide with  
 us,  
 And ride no more at random, noble Prince!  
 Here was the knight, and here he left a  
 shield;  
 This will he send or come for: furthermore  
 Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,  
 Needs must we hear.' To this the cour-  
 teous Prince  
 Accorded with his wonted courtesy,  
 Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,  
 And stay'd; and cast his eyes on fair  
 Elaine:  
 Where could be found face daintier? then  
 her shape  
 From forehead down to foot, perfect—  
 again  
 From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd:  
 'Well—if I bide, lo! this wild flower for  
 me!  
 And oft they met among the garden yews,  
 And there he set himself to play upon her  
 With sallying wit, free flashes from a height  
 Above her, graces of the court, and songs,  
 Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden clo-  
 quence  
 And amorous adulation, till the maid  
 Rebell'd against it, saying to him, 'Prince,  
 O loyal nephew of our noble King,  
 Why ask you not to see the shield he left,



## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Whence you might learn his name? Why  
slight your King,  
And lose the quest he sent you on, and  
prove

No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and went  
To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine head,'  
said he

'I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,  
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;  
But an ye will it let me see the shield.'

And when the shield was brought, and  
Gawain saw

Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with  
gold,

Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and  
mock'd:

'Right was the King! our Lancelot! that  
true man!'

'And right was I,' she answer'd merrily, 'I,  
Who dream'd my knight the greatest  
knight of all.'

'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain, 'that you  
love

This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye  
know it!

Speak therefore: shall I waste myself in  
vain?'

Full simple was her answer, 'What know  
I?

My brethren have been all my fellowship;  
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,  
Wish'd it had been my mother, for they  
talk'd,

Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so  
myself—

I know not if I know what true love is,  
But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
I know there is none other I can love.'

'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye love  
him well,

But would not, knew ye what all others  
know,

And whom he loves.' 'So be it,' cried  
Elaine,

And lifted her fair face and moved away:  
But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a little!  
One golden minute's grace! he wore your  
sleeve:

Would he break faith with one I may not  
name?

Must our true man change like a leaf at  
last?

Nay—like enow: why then, far be it from  
me

To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!  
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well  
Where your great knight is hidden, let me  
leave

My quest with you; the diamond also: here!  
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;  
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it

From your own hand; and whether he love  
or not,

A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well  
A thousand times!—a thousand times fare-  
well!

Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two  
May meet at court hereafter: there, I think,  
So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,  
We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,  
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he  
gave,

The diamond, and all wearied of the quest  
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went  
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there told  
the King

What the King knew, 'Sir Lancelot is the  
knight.'

And added, 'Sire, my liege, so much I  
learnt;

But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round  
The region: but I lighted on the maid

Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him; and  
to her,

Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,  
I gave the diamond: she will render it;  
For by mine head she knows his hiding-  
place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and  
replied,

'Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more  
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget  
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in  
awe,

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,

Linger'd that other, staring after him:

Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad

About the maid of Astolat, and her love.

All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed:

'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot;  
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.'

Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all

Had marvel what the maid might be, but most

Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame  
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.

She, that had heard the noise of it before,  
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,

Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tranquillity.

So ran the tale like fire about the court,  
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared:

Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice

Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,  
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid  
Smiled at each other, while the Queen,  
who sat

With lips severely placid, felt the knot  
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen

Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor

Beneath the banquet, where the meats became

As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,  
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept  
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,

Crept to her father, while he mused alone,  
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,

'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault  
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,  
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?'

'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherefore, let me hence,'

She answer'd, 'and find out our dear Lavaine.'

'Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:  
Bide,' answer'd he: 'we needs must hear anon

Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she said,  
'And of that other, for I needs must hence  
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,  
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,

Lest I be found as faithless in the quest  
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.

Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams  
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.  
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,

My father, to be sweet and serviceable  
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know  
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence

I pray you.' Then her father nodding said,  
'Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well, my child,  
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,

Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it—

And sure I think this fruit is hung too high  
For any mouth to gape for save a queen's—  
Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you gone,

Being so very wilful you must go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slept away,  
And while she made her ready for her ride,  
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,  
'Being so very wilful you must go,'  
And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,  
'Being so very wilful you must die.'

But she was happy enough and shook it off,  
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;  
And in her heart she answer'd it and said,  
'What matter, so I help him back to life?'  
Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide

Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs

To Camelot, and before the city-gates

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Came on her brother with a happy face  
 Making a roan horse caper and curvet  
 For pleasure all about a field of flowers:  
 Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she cried,  
 'Lavaine,  
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?' He  
 amazed,  
 'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!  
 How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?'  
 But when the maid had told him all her  
 tale,  
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his  
 moods  
 Left them, and under the strange-statued  
 gate,  
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystic-  
 ally,  
 Past up the still rich city to his kin,  
 His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;  
 And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove  
 Led to the caves: there first she saw the  
 casque  
 Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet sleeve,  
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls  
 away,  
 Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she  
 laugh'd,  
 Because he had not loosed it from his helm,  
 But meant once more perchance to tourney  
 in it.  
 And when they gain'd the cell wherein he  
 slept,  
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands  
 Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream  
 Of dragging down his enemy made them  
 move.  
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek, un-  
 shorn,  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.  
 The sound not wanted in a place so still  
 Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd  
 his eyes  
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to him,  
 saying,  
 'Your prize the diamond sent you by the  
 King:'  
 His eyes glisten'd: she fancied 'Is it for  
 me?'  
 And when the maid had told him all the  
 tale


Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the  
 quest  
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt  
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,  
 And laid the diamond in his open hand.  
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the child  
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her  
 face.  
 At once she slipt like water to the floor.  
 'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath wearied  
 you.  
 Rest must you have.' 'No rest for me,' she  
 said;  
 'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest.'  
 What might she mean by that? his large  
 black eyes,  
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon  
 her,  
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself  
 In the heart's colours on her simple face;  
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplex't in  
 mind,  
 And being weak in body said no more;  
 But did not love the colour; woman's love,  
 Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd  
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the  
 fields,  
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured  
 gates  
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin;  
 There bode the night: but woke with dawn,  
 and past  
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,  
 Thence to the cave: so day by day she past  
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro  
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,  
 And likewise many a night: and Lancelot  
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little  
 hurt  
 Whereof he should be quickly whole, at  
 times  
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem  
 Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid  
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him  
 Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,  
 Milder than any mother to a sick child,  
 And never woman yet, since man's first  
 fall,  
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all  
The simples and the science of that time,  
Told him that her fine care had saved his  
life.

And the sick man forgot her simple blush,  
Would call her friend and sister, sweet  
Elaine,

Would listen for her coming and regret  
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,    
And loved her with all love except the love  
Of man and woman when they love their  
best,

Closest and sweetest, and had died the  
death

In any knightly fashion for her sake.  
And peradventure had he seen her first  
She might have made this and that other  
world

Another world for the sick man; but now  
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,  
His honour rooted in dishonour stood,  
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness  
made  
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.  
These, as but born of sickness, could not  
live:

For when the blood ran lustier in him  
again,

Full often the bright image of one face,  
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,  
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.  
Then if the maiden, while that ghostly  
grace

Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd  
not,

Or short and coldly, and she knew right  
well

What the rough sickness meant, but what  
this meant

She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her  
sight,

And drove her ere her time across the fields  
Far into the rich city, where alone  
She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain: it cannot be.  
He will not love me: how then? must I  
die?'

Then as a little helpless innocent bird,  
That has but one plain passage of few  
notes,

Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er  
For all an April morning, till the ear  
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid  
Went half the night repeating, 'Must I  
die?'

And now to right she turn'd, and now to  
left,

And found no ease in turning or in rest;  
And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd, 'death  
or him,'

Again and like a burthen, 'Him or death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was  
whole,

To Astolat returning rode the three.

There morn by morn, arraying her sweet  
self

In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her  
best,

She came before Sir Lancelot, for she  
thought

'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,  
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.'  
And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid  
That she should ask some goodly gift of  
him

For her own self or hers; 'and do not shun  
To speak the wish most near to your true  
heart;

Such service have ye done me, that I make  
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord  
am I

In mine own land, and what I will I can.'  
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,  
But like a ghost without the power to speak.  
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her  
wish,

And bode among them yet a little space  
Till he should learn it, and one morn it  
chanced

He found her in among the garden yews,  
And said, 'Delay no longer, speak your wish,  
Seeing I go to-day:' then out she brake:  
'Going? and we shall never see you more.  
And I must die for want of one bold word.'  
'Speak: that I live to hear,' he said, 'is  
yours.'

Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:  
'I have gone mad. I love you: let me die.'  
'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what is  
this?'

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

And innocently extending her white arms,  
'Your love,' she said, 'your love—to be  
your wife.'

And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen to  
wed,

I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine:  
But now there never will be wife of mine.'  
'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be wife,  
But to be with you still, to see your face,  
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the  
world.'

And Lancelot answer'd, 'Nay, the world,  
the world,

All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart  
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue  
To blare its own interpretation—nay,

Full ill then should I quit your brother's  
love,

And your good father's kindness.' And she  
said,

'Not to be with you, not to see your face—  
Alas for me then, my good days are done.'  
'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times  
nay!

This is not love: but love's first flash in  
youth,

Most common: yea, I know it of mine own  
self:

And you yourself will smile at your own  
self

Hereafter, when you yield your flower of  
life

To one more fitly yours, not thrice your  
age:

And then will I, for true you are and sweet  
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,  
More specially should your good knight be  
poor,

Endow you with broad land and territory  
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,  
So that would make you happy: further—  
more,

Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my  
blood,

In all your quarrels will I be your knight.  
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,  
And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke

She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-  
pale

Stood grasping what was nearest, then  
replied:

'Of all this will I nothing;' and so fell,  
And thus they bore her swooning to her  
tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black  
walls of yew

Their talk had pierced, her father: 'Ay, a  
flash,

I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.  
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.

I pray you, use some rough discourtesy  
To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,  
'That were against me: what I can I will;'  
And there that day remain'd, and toward  
even

Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the  
maid,

Stript off the case, and gave the naked  
shield;

Then, when she heard his horse upon the  
stones,

Unclassing flung the casement back, and  
look'd

Down on his helm, from which her sleeve  
had gone.

And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound  
And she by tact of love was well aware  
That Lancelot knew that she was looking  
at him.

And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his  
hand,

Nor bad farewell, but sadly rode away.  
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:  
His very shield was gone; only the case,  
Her own poor work, her empty labour, left.  
But still she heard him, still his picture  
form'd

And grew between her and the pictured  
wall.

Then came her father, saying in low tones,  
'Have comfort,' whom she greeted quietly.  
Then came her brethren saying, 'Peace to  
thee,

Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all  
calm.

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

But when they left her to herself again,  
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant  
field

Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the  
owls

Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt  
Her fancies with the fallow-rifted glooms  
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,  
And call'd her song 'The Song of Love and  
Death,'

And sang it: sweetly could she make and  
sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in  
vain;  
And sweet is death who puts an end to  
pain:

I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death  
must be:  
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.  
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to fade  
away,  
Sweet death, that seems to make us love-  
less clay,  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could be;  
I needs must follow death, who calls for  
me;  
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'

High with the last line scaled her voice,  
and this,  
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind  
That shook her tower, the brothers heard,  
and thought  
With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of  
the house  
That ever shrieks before a death,' and  
call'd  
The father, and all three in hurry and fear  
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of  
dawn  
Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let me  
die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we know,  
Repeating, till the word we know so well  
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,  
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought  
'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden fell,  
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,  
Speaking a still good-morrow with her  
eyes.

At last she said, 'Sweet brothers, yester-  
night

I seem'd a curious little maid again,  
As happy as when we dwelt among the  
woods,

And when ye used to take me with the  
flood

Up the great river in the boatman's boat.  
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape  
That has the poplar on it: there ye fixt  
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.  
And yet I cried because ye would not pass  
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood  
Until we found the palace of the King.  
And yet ye would not; but this night I  
dream'd

That I was all alone upon the flood,  
And then I said, "Now shall I have my  
will:"

And there I woke, but still the wish re-  
main'd.

So let me hence that I may pass at last  
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,  
Until I find the palace of the King.  
There will I enter in among them all,  
And no man there will dare to mock at me;  
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at  
me,

And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at  
me;

Gawain, who bad a thousand farewells to  
me,

Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bad me  
one:

And there the King will know me and my  
love,

And there the Queen herself will pity me,  
And all the gentle court will welcome me,  
And after my long voyage I shall rest!

'Peace,' said her father, 'O my child, ye  
seem

Light-headed, for what force is yours to go

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

So far, being sick? and wherefore would  
ye look  
On this proud fellow again, who scorns  
us all?’

Then the rough Torre began to heave  
and move,  
And bluster into stormy sobs and say,  
‘I never loved him: an I meet with him,  
I care not howsoever great he be,  
Then will I strike at him and strike him  
down,  
Give me good fortune, I will strike him  
dead,  
For this discomfort he hath done the  
house.’

To whom the gentle sister made reply,  
‘Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be  
wroth,  
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot’s fault  
Not to love me, than it is mine to love  
Him of all men who seems to me the  
highest.’

‘Highest?’ the father answer’d, echoing  
‘highest?’  
(He meant to break the passion in her)  
‘nay,  
Daughter, I know not what you call the  
highest;  
But this I know, for all the people know it,  
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:  
And she returns his love in open shame;  
If this be high, what is it to be low?’

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:  
‘Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I  
For anger: these are slanders: never yet  
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.  
He makes no friend who never made a foe.  
But now it is my glory to have loved  
One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,  
My father, howsoe’er I seem to you,  
Not all unhappy, having loved God’s best  
And greatest, tho’ my love had no return:  
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,  
Thanks, but you work against your own  
desire;  
For if I could believe the things you say  
I should but die the sooner; wherefore  
cease,

Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man  
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and  
die.’

So when the ghostly man had come and  
gone,  
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,  
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised  
A letter, word for word; and when he  
ask’d  
‘Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?’  
Then will I bear it gladly;’ she replied,  
‘For Lancelot and the Queen and all the  
world,  
But I myself must bear it.’ Then he wrote  
The letter she devised; which being writ  
And folded, ‘O sweet father, tender and  
true,  
Deny me not,’ she said—‘ye never yet  
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,  
My latest: lay the letter in my hand  
A little ere I die, and close the hand  
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.  
And when the heat is gone from out my  
heart,  
Then take the little bed on which I died  
For Lancelot’s love, and deck it like the  
Queen’s  
For richness, and me also like the Queen  
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.  
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier  
To take me to the river, and a barge  
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.  
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.  
There surely I shall speak for mine own  
self,  
And none of you can speak for me so well.  
And therefore let our dumb old man alone  
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he  
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.’

She ceased: her father promised; where-  
upon  
She grew so cheerful that they deem’d her  
death  
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.  
But ten slow mornings past, and on the  
eleventh  
Her father laid the letter in her hand,  
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.  
So that day there was dole in Astolai.

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

But when the next sun brake from under-ground,  
 Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows  
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone  
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,  
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.  
 There sat the lifelong creature of the house,  
 Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.  
 So those two brethren from the chariot took  
 And on the black decks laid her in her bed,  
 Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung  
 The silken case with braided blazonings,  
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her  
 'Sister, farewell for ever,' and again  
 'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.  
 Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,  
 Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood—  
 In her right hand the lily, in her left  
 The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—  
 And all the coverlid was cloth of gold  
 Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white  
 All but her face, and that clear-featured face  
 Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,  
 But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved  
 Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
 The price of half a realm, his costly gift,  
 Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,  
 With deaths of others, and almost his own,  
 The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he saw  
 One of her house, and sent him to the Queen  
 Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed  
 With such and so unmoved a majesty

She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,  
 Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet  
 For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye  
 The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,  
 In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,  
 And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,  
 Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,  
 They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd,  
 'Queen,  
 Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,  
 Take, what I had not won except for you,  
 These jewels, and make me happy, making them  
 An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,  
 Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's  
 Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words:  
 Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin  
 In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it  
 Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words  
 Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my Queen,  
 I hear of rumours flying thro' your court.  
 Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,  
 Should have in it an absoluter trust  
 To make up the defect: let rumours be:  
 When did not rumours fly? these, as I trust  
 That you trust me in your own nobleness,  
 I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away,  
 the Queen  
 Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine  
 Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,  
 Till all the place whereon she stood was green;  
 Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand  
 Received at once and laid aside the gems  
 There on a table near her, and replied:

'It may be, I am quicker of belief  
 Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.



## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.  
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,  
It can be broken easier. I for you  
This many a year have done despite and  
wrong

To one whom ever in my heart of hearts  
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?  
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice  
their worth

Being your gift, had you not lost your own.  
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!  
For her! for your new fancy. Only this  
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys  
apart,

I doubt not that however changed, you  
keep

So much of what is graceful: and myself  
Would shun to break those bounds of  
courtesy

In which as Arthur's Queen I move and  
rule:

So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!  
A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.  
So pray you, add my diamonds to her  
pearls;

Deck her with these; tell her, she shines  
me down:

An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's  
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck  
O as much fairer—as a faith once fair  
Was richer than these diamonds—hers not  
mine—

Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,  
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my  
will—

She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,  
And, thro' the casement standing wide for  
heat,

Flung them, and down they flash'd, and  
smote the stream.

Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it  
were,

Diamonds to meet them, and they past  
away.

Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half dis-  
dain

At love, life, all things, on the window  
ledge,

Close underneath his eyes, and right across  
Where these had fallen, slowly past the  
barge

Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst  
away

To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,  
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused,  
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door;  
to whom,

All up the marble stair, tier over tier,  
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes  
that ask'd

'What is it?' but that oarsman's haggard  
face,

As hard and still as is the face that men  
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken  
rocks

On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they  
said,

'He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,  
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen,  
so fair!

Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh  
and blood?

Or come to take the King to Fairyland?  
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,  
But that he passes into Fairyland.'

While thus they babbled of the King,  
the King

Came girt with knights: then turn'd the  
tongueless man

From the half-face to the full eye, and rose  
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.  
So Arthur bad the meek Sir Percivale  
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;  
And reverently they bore her into hall.

Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd  
at her,

And Lancelot later came and mused at her,  
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her:  
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,  
Stooped, took, brake seal, and read it; this  
was all:

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the  
Lake,

I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.  
I loved you, and my love had no return,  
And therefore my true love has been my death.  
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,  
And to all other ladies, I make moan:  
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
As thou art a knight peerless.'

Thus he read;  
And ever in the reading, lords and dames  
Wept, looking often from his face who read  
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,  
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that  
her lips,  
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them  
all:  
'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,  
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death  
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,  
But loved me with a love beyond all love  
In women, whomsoever I have known.  
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;  
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.  
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave  
No cause, not willingly, for such a love:  
To this I call my friends in testimony,  
Her brethren, and her father, who himself  
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,  
'To break her passion, some discourtesy  
Against my nature: what I could, I did.  
I left her and I bad her no farewell;  
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,  
I might have put my wits to some rough use,  
And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen  
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)  
'Ye might at least have done her so much grace,  
Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death.'

He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,  
He adding,

'Queen, she would not be content  
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.  
Then might she follow me thro' the world,  
she ask'd;  
It could not be. I told her that her love  
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down

To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,  
More specially were he, she wedded, poor,  
Estate them with large land and territory  
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,  
To keep them in all joyance: more than this  
I could not; this she would not, and she died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, 'O my knight,  
It will be to thy worship, as my knight,  
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,  
To see that she be buried worshipfully.'

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm  
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went  
The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,  
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see  
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,  
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,  
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.  
And when the knights had laid her comely head  
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,  
Then Arthur spake among them, 'Let her tomb  
Be costly, and her image thereupon,  
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet  
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.  
And let the story of her dolorous voyage  
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb  
In letters gold and azure!' which was wrought  
Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

And people, from the high door streaming,  
brake

Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,  
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved  
apart,

Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, 'Lancelot,  
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love.'

He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,  
'That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen,  
forgiven.'

But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,  
Approach'd him, and with full affection  
said,

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom  
I have

Most joy and most affiance, for I know  
What thou hast been in battle by my side,  
And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt

Strike down the lusty and long-practised  
knight,

And let the younger and unskill'd go by  
To win his honour and to make his name,  
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man  
Made to be loved; but now I would to  
God,

Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,  
Thou couldst have loved this maiden,  
shaped, it seems,

By God for thee alone, and from her face,  
If one may judge the living by the dead,  
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,  
Who might have brought thee, now a  
lonely man

Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons  
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,  
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the  
Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, 'Fair she was,  
my King,

Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.  
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,  
To doubt her pureness were to want a  
heart—

Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love  
Could bind him, but free love will not be  
bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,' said  
the King.

'Let love be free; free love is for the best:  
And, after heaven, on our dull side of  
death,

What should be best, if not so pure a love  
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee  
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,  
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he  
went,

And at the inrunning of a little brook  
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd  
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes  
And saw the barge that brought her moving  
down,

Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said  
Low in himself, 'Ah simple heart and  
sweet,

Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love  
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for  
thy soul?

Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—  
Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in love"?  
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous  
pride?

Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,  
May not your crescent fear for name and  
fame

Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?  
Why did the King dwell on my name to  
me?

Mine own name shames me, seeming a  
reproach,

Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake  
Caught from his mother's arms—the won-  
drous one

Who passes thro' the vision of the night—  
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns  
Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn  
She kiss'd me saying, "Thou art fair, my  
child,

As a king's son," and often in her arms  
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.  
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er  
it be!

For what am I? what profits me my name  
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and  
have it:

Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;  
Now grown a part of me: but what use  
in it?

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

To make men worse by making my sin known?

Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?  
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man  
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break

These bonds that so defame me: not without

She wills it: would I, if she will'd it? nay,  
Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,

O pray him, send a sudden Angel down  
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,  
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,  
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,  
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

### THE HOLY GRAIL

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done

In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,  
Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd  
The Pure,

Had pass'd into the silent life of prayer,  
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for the cowl

The helmet in an abbey far away  
From Camelot, there, and not long after,  
died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,  
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the rest,

And honour'd him, and wrought into his heart

A way by love that waken'd love within,  
To answer that which came: and as they sat

Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening half

The cloisters, on a gustful April morn  
That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke

Above them, ere the summer when he died,  
The monk Ambrosius question'd Percivale:

'O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,

Spring after spring, for half a hundred years:

For never have I known the world without,  
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale: but thee,  
When first thou camest—such a courtesy  
Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice—I knew

For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall;  
For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,  
Some true, some light, but every one of you  
Stamp'd with the image of the King; and now

Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round,

My brother? was it earthly passion crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight; 'for no such passion mine.

But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail  
Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,  
And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out

Among us in the jousts, while women watch

Who wins, who falls; and waste the spiritual strength

Within us, better offer'd up to Heaven.'

To whom the monk: 'The Holy Grail—I trust

We are green in Heaven's eyes; but here too much

We moulder—as to things without I mean—

Yet one of your own knights, a guest of ours,

Told us of this in our refectory,  
But spake with such a sadness and so low  
We heard not half of what he said. What is it?

The phantom of a cup that comes and goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' answer'd Percivale.

'The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord

Drank at the last sad supper with his own.  
This, from the blessed land of Aromat—

## THE HOLY GRAIL

After the day of darkness, when the dead  
Went wandering o'er Moriah—the good  
saint

Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought  
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn  
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our  
Lord.

And there awhile it bode; and if a man  
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at  
once,

By faith, of all his ills. But then the times  
Grew to such evil that the holy cup  
Was caught away to Heaven, and dis-  
appear'd.'

To whom the monk: 'From our old  
books I know

That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,  
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,  
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to  
build;

And there he built with wattles from the  
marsh

A little lonely church in days of yore,  
For so they say, these books of ours, but  
seem

Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.  
But who first saw the holy thing to-day?'

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,  
And one no further off in blood from me  
Than sister; and if ever holy maid  
With knees of adoration wore the stone,  
A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,  
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,  
With such a fervent flame of human love,  
Which being rudely blunted, glanced and  
shot

Only to holy things; to prayer and praise  
She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,  
Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,  
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,  
And the strange sound of an adulterous  
race,

Across the iron grating of her cell  
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the  
more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or  
what

Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,

A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,  
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,  
A legend handed down thro' five or six,  
And each of these a hundred winters old,  
From our Lord's time. And when King  
Arthur made

His Table Round, and all men's hearts  
became

Clean for a season, surely he had thought  
That now the Holy Grail would come  
again;

But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would  
come,

And heal the world of all their wickedness!  
"O Father!" ask'd the maiden, "might it  
come

To me by prayer and fasting?" "Nay,"  
said he,

"I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow."  
And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun  
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and  
I thought

She might have risen and floated when I  
saw her.

'For on a day she sent to speak with me,  
And when she came to speak, behold her  
eyes

Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,  
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,  
Beautiful in the light of holiness.

And "O my brother Percivale," she said,  
"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy  
Grail:

For, waked at dead of night, I heard a  
sound

As of a silver horn from o'er the hills  
Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's  
use

To hunt by moonlight;' and the slender  
sound

As from a distance beyond distance grew  
Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,  
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch  
with hand,

Was like that music as it came; and then  
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver  
beam,

And down the long beam stole the Holy  
Grail,

Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,

## THE HOLY GRAIL

Till all the white walls of my cell were  
died  
With rosy colours leaping on the wall;  
And then the music faded, and the Grail  
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the  
walls  
The rosy quiverings died into the night.  
So now the Holy Thing is here again  
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,  
And tell thy brother knights to fast and  
pray,  
That so perchance the vision may be seen  
By thee and those, and all the world be  
heal'd."

"Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of  
this  
To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd  
Always, and many among us many a week  
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,  
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

"And one there was among us, ever moved  
Among us in white armour, Galahad.  
"God make thee good as thou art beautiful,"  
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight;  
and none  
In so young youth, was ever made a knight  
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he  
heard  
My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;  
His eyes became so like her own, they  
seem'd  
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

"Sister or brother none had he; but some  
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some  
said  
Begotten by enchantment—chatterers they  
Like birds of passage piping up and down,  
That gape for flies—we know not whence  
they come;  
For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

"But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore  
away  
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of  
hair  
Which made a silken mat-work for her  
feet;

And out of this she plaited broad and long  
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver  
thread  
And crimson in the belt a strange device,  
A crimson grail within a silver beam;  
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound  
it on him,  
Saying, "My knight, my love, my knight  
of heaven,  
O thou, my love, whose love is one with  
mine,  
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my  
belt.  
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have  
seen,  
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee  
king  
Far in the spiritual city:" and as she spake  
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes  
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid  
her mind  
On him, and he believed in her belief.

"Then came a year of miracle: O brother,  
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,  
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,  
And carven with strange figures; and in  
and out  
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll  
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.  
And Merlin call'd it "The Siege perilous,"  
Perilous for good and ill; "for there," he  
said,  
"No man could sit but he should lose him-  
self:"  
And once by misadventure Merlin sat  
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,  
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,  
Cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!"

"Then on a summer night it came to pass,  
While the great banquet lay along the hall,  
That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's  
chair.

"And all at once, as there we sat, we  
heard  
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,  
And rending, and a blast, and overhead  
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.  
And in the blast there smote along the hall

## THE HOLY GRAIL

A beam of light seven times more clear  
than day:

And down the long beam stole the Holy  
Grail

All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,  
And none might see who bare it, and it  
past.

But every knight beheld his fellow's face  
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,  
And staring each at other like dumb men  
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

'I sware a vow before them all, that I,  
Because I had not seen the Grail, would  
ride

A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,  
Until I found and saw it, as the nun  
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the  
vow,

And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin,  
sware,

And Lancelot sware, and many among the  
knights,

And Gawain sware, and louder than the  
rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking  
him,  
'What said the King? Did Arthur take the  
vow?'

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale, 'the  
King,

Was not in hall: for early that same day,  
Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold,  
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall  
Crying on help: for all her shining hair  
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky  
arm

Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all  
she wore

Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn  
In tempest: so the King arose and went  
To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild  
bees

That made such honey in his realm. How-  
beit

Some little of this marvel he too saw,  
Returning o'er the plain that then began  
To darken under Camelot; whence the  
King

Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there! the  
roofs

Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-  
smoke!

Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the  
bolt."

For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,  
As having there so oft with all his knights  
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

'O brother, had you known our mighty  
hall,

Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!  
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,  
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,  
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,  
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing  
brook,

Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.  
And four great zones of sculpture, set  
betwixt

With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall:  
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,  
And in the second men are slaying beasts,  
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,  
And on the fourth are men with growing  
wings,

And over all one statue in the mould  
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,  
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern  
Star.

And eastward fronts the statue, and the  
crown

And both the wings are made of gold, and  
flame

At sunrise till the people in far fields,  
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,  
Behold it, crying, "We have still a King."

'And, brother, had you known our hall  
within,

Broader and higher than any in all the  
lands!

Where twelve great windows blazon  
Arthur's wars,

And all the light that falls upon the board  
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of  
our King.

Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,  
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount  
and mere,

## THE HOLY GRAIL

Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.  
And also one to the west, and counter to it,  
And blank: and who shall blazon it?  
when and how?—

O there, perchance, when all our wars are  
done,  
The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

'So to this hall full quickly rode the  
King,  
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,  
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish,  
wrapt  
In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.  
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw  
The golden dragon sparkling over all:  
And many of those who burnt the hold,  
their arms  
Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with  
smoke, and scar'd,  
Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,  
Full of the vision, prest: and then the King  
Spake to me, being nearest, "Percivale,"  
(Because the hall was all in tumult—some  
Vowing, and some protesting), "what is  
this?"

'O brother, when I told him what had  
chanced,  
My sister's vision, and the rest, his face  
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,  
When some brave deed seem'd to be done  
in vain,  
Darken; and "Woe is me, my knights," he  
cried,  
"Had I been here, ye had not sworn the  
vow."  
Bold was mine answer, "Had thyself been  
here,  
My King, thou wouldst have sworn."  
"Yea, yea," said he,  
"Art thou so bold and hast not seen the  
Grail?"

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw  
the light,  
But since I did not see the Holy Thing,  
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw."

'Then when he ask'd us, knight by  
knight, if any

Had seen it, all their answers were as one:  
"Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn  
our vows."

"Lo now," said Arthur, "have ye seen  
a cloud?  
What go ye into the wilderness to see?"

'Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a  
voice  
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd  
"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,  
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—  
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.'"

'Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the  
King, "for such  
As thou art is the vision, not for these.  
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign—  
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she—  
A sign to maim this Order which I made.  
But ye, that follow but the leader's bell"  
(Brother, the King was hard upon his  
knights)  
"Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,  
And one hath sung and all the dumb will  
sing.

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne  
Five knights at once, and every younger  
knight,  
Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,  
Till overborne by one, he learns—and ye,  
What are ye? Galahads?—no, nor Per-  
civales"

(For thus it pleased the King to range me  
close  
After Sir Galahad); "nay," said he, "but  
men  
With strength and will to right the  
wrong'd, of power  
To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,  
Knights that in twelve great battles  
splash'd and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own  
heathen blood—  
But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.  
Go, since your vows are sacred, being  
made:

Yet—for ye know the cries of all my realm  
Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my  
knights,



## THE HOLY GRAIL

Your places being vacant at my side,  
This chance of noble deeds will come  
and go  
Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering  
fires  
Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea  
most,  
Return no more: ye think I show myself  
Too dark a prophet: come now, let us meet  
The morrow morn once more in one full  
field  
Of gracious pastime, that once more the  
King,  
Before ye leave him for this Quest, may  
count  
The yet-unbroken strength of all his  
knights,  
Rejoicing in that Order which he made."

'So when the sun broke next from under  
ground,  
All the great table of our Arthur closed  
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,  
So many lances broken—never yet  
Had Camelot seen the like, since Arthur  
came;  
And I myself and Galahad, for a strength  
Was in us from the vision, overthrew  
So many knights that all the people cried,  
And almost burst the barriers in their heat,  
Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale!"

'But when the next day brake from under  
ground—  
O brother, had you known our Camelot,  
Built by old kings, age after age, so old  
The King himself had fears that it would  
fall,  
So strange, and rich, and dim; for where  
the roofs  
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,  
Met foreheads all along the street of those  
Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and  
where the long  
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the  
necks  
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,  
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers  
of flowers  
Fell as we past; and men and boys astride  
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,

At all the corners, named us each by name,  
Calling "God speed!" but in the ways  
below  
The knights and ladies wept, and rich and  
poor  
Wept, and the King himself could hardly  
speak  
For grief, and all in middle street the  
Queen,  
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd  
aloud,  
"This madness has come on us for our  
sins."  
So to the Gate of the three Queens we  
came,  
Where Arthur's wars are render'd mysti-  
cally,  
And thence departed every one his way.

'And I was lifted up in heart, and thought  
Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,  
How my strong lance had beaten down the  
knights,  
So many and famous names; and never  
yet  
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth so  
green,  
For all my blood danced in me, and I knew  
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of our  
King,  
That most of us would follow wandering  
fires,  
Came like a driving gloom across my mind.  
Then every evil word I had spoken once,  
And every evil thought I had thought of  
old,  
And every evil deed I ever did,  
Awoke and cried, "This Quest is not for  
thee."  
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself  
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,  
And I was thirsty even unto death;  
And I, too, cried, "This Quest is not for  
thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought my  
thirst  
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a  
brook.

## THE HOLY GRAIL

With one sharp rapid, where the crisping  
white  
Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave,  
And took both ear and eye; and o'er the  
brook

Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook  
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will rest here,"  
I said, "I am not worthy of the Quest;"  
But even while I drank the brook, and ate  
The goodly apples, all these things at once  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone,  
And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns.

'And then behold a woman at a door  
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she  
sat,  
And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,  
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose  
Opening her arms to meet me, as who  
should say,  
"Rest here;" but when I touch'd her, lo!  
she, too,  
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house  
Became no better than a broken shed,  
And in it a dead babe; and also this  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

'And on I rode, and greater was my  
thirst.  
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the  
world,  
And where it smote the plowshare in the  
field,  
The plowman left his plowing, and fell  
down  
Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail,  
The milkmaid left her milking, and fell  
down  
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought  
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had risen.  
Then was I ware of one that on me moved  
In golden armour with a crown of gold  
About a casque all jewels; and his horse  
In golden armour jewell'd everywhere:  
And on the splendour came, flashing me  
blind;  
And seem'd to me the Lord of all the  
world,  
Being so huge. But when I thought he  
meant  
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,

Open'd his arms to embrace me as he came,  
And up I went and touch'd him, and he,  
too,  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone  
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

'And I rode on and found a mighty hill,  
And on the top, a city wall'd: the spires  
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into  
heaven.

And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and  
these  
Cried to me climbing, "Welcome, Perci-  
vale!

Thou mightiest and thou purest among  
men!"

And glad was I and clomb, but found at top  
No man, nor any voice. And thence I past  
Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw  
That man had once dwelt there; but there  
I found

Only one man of an exceeding age.  
"Where is that goodly company," said I,  
"That so cried out upon me?" and he had  
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd,  
"Whence and what art thou?" and even as  
he spoke

Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I  
Was left alone once more, and cried in  
grief,

"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself  
And touch it, it will crumble into dust."

'And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,  
Low as the hill was high, and where the  
vale

Was lowest, found a chapel, and thereby  
A holy hermit in a hermitage,  
To whom I told my phantoms, and he  
said:

"O son, thou hast not true humility,  
The highest virtue, mother of them all;  
For when the Lord of all things made  
Himself

Naked of glory for His mortal change,  
'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all is  
thine,'

And all her form shone forth with sudden  
light

So that the angels were amazed, and she  
Follow'd Him down, and like a flying star

## THE HOLY GRAIL

Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east;  
But her thou hast not known: for what is  
this

Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy  
sins?

Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself  
As Galahad." When the hermit made an  
end,

In silver armour suddenly Galahad shone  
Before us, and against the chapel door  
Laid lance, and enter'd, and we knelt in  
prayer.

And there the hermit slaked my burning  
thirst,

And at the sacring of the mass I saw  
The holy elements alone; but he,  
"Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the  
Grail,

The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine:  
I saw the fiery face as of a child  
That smote itself into the bread, and went;  
And hither am I come; and never yet  
Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,  
This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side, nor  
come

Cover'd, but moving with me night and  
day,

Fainter by day, but always in the night  
Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd  
marsh

Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top  
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below  
Blood-red. And in the strength of this I  
rode,

Shattering all evil customs everywhere,  
And past thro' Pagan realms, and made  
them mine,

And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore  
them down,  
And broke thro' all, and in the strength of  
this

Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,  
And hence I go; and one will crown me  
king

Far in the spiritual city; and come thou,  
too,

For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

"While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling  
on mine,

Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew

One with him, to believe as he believed.  
Then, when the day began to wane, we  
went.

"There rose a hill that none but man  
could climb,  
Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-  
courses—

Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it,  
storm

Round us and death; for every moment  
glanced

His silver arms and gloom'd: so quick and  
thick

The lightnings here and there to left and  
right

Struck, till the dry old trunks about us,  
dead,

Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,  
Sprang into fire: and at the base we found  
On either hand, as far as eye could see,  
A great black swamp and of an evil smell,  
Part black, part whiten'd with the bones  
of men,

Not to be crost, save that some ancient  
king

Had built a way, where, link'd with many  
a bridge,

A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.  
And Galahad fled along them bridge by

bridge,  
And every bridge as quickly as he crost  
Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I  
yearn'd

To follow; and thrice above him all the  
heavens

Open'd and blazed with thunder such as  
seem'd

Shoutings of all the sons of God: and first  
At once I saw him far on the great Sea,  
In silver-shining armour starry-clear;  
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung  
Clothed in white samite or a luminous  
cloud.

And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,  
If boat it were—I saw not whence it came.  
And when the heavens open'd and blazed  
again

Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—  
And had he set the sail, or had the boat  
Become a living creature clad with wings?

## THE HOLY GRAIL

And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung  
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,  
For now I knew the veil had been with-  
drawn.

Then in a moment when they blazed again  
Opening, I saw the least of little stars  
Down on the waste, and straight beyond  
the star

I saw the spiritual city and all her spires  
And gateways in a glory like one pearl—  
No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints—  
Strike from the sea; and from the star  
there shot

A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there  
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,  
Which never eyes on earth again shall see.  
Then fell the floods of heaven drowning  
the deep.

And how my feet recroost the deathful ridge  
No memory in me lives; but that I touch'd  
The chapel-doors at dawn I know; and  
thence

Taking my war-horse from the holy man,  
Glad that no phantom vexed me more,  
return'd

To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's  
wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius,—'for in  
sooth

These ancient books—and they would win  
thee—teem,

Only I find not there this Holy Grail,  
With miracles and marvels like to these,  
Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,  
Who read but on my breviary with ease,  
Till my head swims; and then go forth and  
pass

Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,  
And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest  
To these old walls—and mingle with our  
folk;

And knowing every honest face of theirs  
As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,  
And every homely secret in their hearts,  
Delight myself with gossip and old wives,  
And ills and aches, and teething, lyings-in,  
And mirthful sayings, children of the place,  
That have no meaning half a league away:  
Or lulling random squabbles when they  
rise,

Chafferings and chatterings at the market-  
cross,

Rejoice, small man, in this small world of  
mine,

Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs—  
O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,  
Came ye on none but phantoms in your  
quest,

No man, no woman?'

Then Sir Percivale:

'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,  
And women were as phantoms. O, my  
brother,

Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee  
How far I falter'd from my quest and vow?  
For after I had lain so many nights,  
A bedmate of the snail and eft and snake,  
In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan  
And meagre, and the vision had not come:  
And then I chanced upon a goodly town  
With one great dwelling in the middle  
of it;

Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd  
By maidens each as fair as any flower:  
But when they led me into hall, behold,  
The Princess of that castle was the one,  
Brother, and that one only, who had ever  
Made my heart leap; for when I moved of  
old

A slender page about her father's hall,  
And she a slender maiden, all my heart  
Went after her with longing: yet we twain  
Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a vow.  
And now I came upon her once again,  
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,  
And all his land and wealth and state were  
hers.

And while I tarried, every day she set  
A banquet richer than the day before  
By me; for all her longing and her will  
Was toward me as of old; till one fair morn  
I walking to and fro beside a stream  
That flash'd across her orchard underneath  
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,  
And calling me the greatest of all knights,  
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first  
time,

And gave herself and all her wealth to me.  
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning  
word,

## THE HOLY GRAIL

That most of us would follow wandering  
fires,

And the Quest faded in my heart. Anon,  
The heads of all her people drew to me,  
With supplication both of knees and  
tongue:

"We have heard of thee: thou art our  
greatest knight,

Our Lady says it, and we well believe:  
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,  
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."

O me, my brother! but one night my vow  
Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,  
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own  
self,

And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but her;  
Then after I was join'd with Galahad  
Cared not for her, nor anything upon  
earth.'

Then said the monk, 'Poor men, when  
yule is cold,

Must be content to sit by little fires.  
And this am I, so that ye care for me  
Ever so little; yea, and blest be Heaven  
That brought thee here to this poor house  
of ours

Where all the brethren are so hard, to  
warm

My cold heart with a friend: but O the pity  
To find thine own first love once more—to  
hold,

Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms,  
Or all but hold, and then—cast her aside,  
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed.  
For we that want the warmth of double life,  
We that are plagued with dreams of some-  
thing sweet

Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich,—  
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthlywise,  
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,  
But live like an old badger in his earth,  
With earth about him everywhere, despite  
All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside,  
None of your knights?'

'Yea so,' said Percivale:

'One night my pathway swerving east, I  
saw

The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors  
All in the middle of the rising moon:

And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him,  
and he me,

And each made joy of either; then he ask'd,  
"Where is he? hast thou seen him—  
Lancelot?—Once,"

Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across me  
—mad,

And maddening what he rode: and when  
I cried,

'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest  
So holy,' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me not!  
I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,  
For now there is a lion in the way.'  
So vanish'd."

"Then Sir Bors had ridden on  
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,  
Because his former madness, once the talk  
And scandal of our table, had return'd;  
For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him  
That ill to him is ill to them; to Bors  
Beyond the rest: he well had been content  
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have  
seen,

The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,  
Being so clouded with his grief and love,  
Small heart was his after the Holy Quest:  
If God would send the vision, well: if not,  
The Quest and he were in the hands of  
Heaven.

'And then, with small adventure met,  
Sir Bors

Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,  
And found a people there among their  
craggs,

Our race and blood, a remnant that were  
left

Paynim amid their circles, and the stones  
They pitch up straight to heaven: and their  
wise men

Were strong in that old magic which can  
trace

The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at  
him

And this high Quest as at a simple thing:  
Told him he follow'd—almost Arthur's  
words—

A mocking fire: "what other fire than he,  
Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom  
blows,

## THE HOLY GRAIL

And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd?"

And when his answer chafed them, the rough crowd,  
Hearing he had a difference with their priests,  
Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell  
Of great piled stones; and lying bounden there  
In darkness thro' innumerable hours  
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep  
Over him till by miracle—what else?—  
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,  
Such as no wind could move: and thro' the gap  
Glimmer'd the streaming scud: then came a night  
Still as the day was loud; and thro' the gap  
The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round—  
For, brother, so one night, because they roll  
Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars,  
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King—  
And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,  
In on him shone: "And then to me, to me,"  
Said good Sir Bors, "beyond all hopes of mine,  
Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for myself—  
Across the seven clear stars—O grace to me—  
In colour like the fingers of a hand  
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail  
Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd  
A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards, a maid,  
Who kept our holy faith among her kin  
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.'

To whom the monk: 'And I remember now  
That pelican on the casque: Sir Bors it was  
Who spake so low and sadly at our board;  
And mighty reverent at our grace was he:  
A square-set man and honest; and his eyes,  
An out-door sign of all the warmth within,  
Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath a cloud,

But heaven had meant it for a sunny one:  
Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But when ye reach'd  
The city, found ye all your knights return'd,  
Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,  
Tell me, and what said each, and what the King?'

Then answer'd Percivale: 'And that can I,  
Brother, and truly; since the living words  
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King  
Pass not from door to door and out again,  
But sit within the house. O, when we reach'd  
The city, our horses stumbling as they trode  
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,  
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cockatrices,  
And shatter'd talbots, which had left the stones  
Raw, that they fell from, brought us to the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the dais-throne,  
And those that had gone out upon the Quest,  
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,  
And those that had not, stood before the King,  
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bad me hail,  
Saying, "A welfare in thine eye reproves  
Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee  
On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding ford.  
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late  
Among the strange devices of our kings;  
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,  
And from the statue Merlin moulded for us  
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but now—the Quest,  
This vision—hast thou seen the Holy Cup,  
That Joseph brought of old to Glastonbury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast heard,  
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve  
To pass away into the quiet life,

## THE HOLY GRAIL

He answer'd not, but, sharply turning,  
ask'd  
Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this Quest for  
thee?"

"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not for  
such as I.

Therefore I communed with a saintly man,  
Who made me sure the Quest was not  
for me;

For I was much awearied of the Quest:  
But found a silk pavilion in a field,  
And merry maidens in it; and then this gale  
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,  
And blew my merry maidens all about  
With all discomfort; yea, and but for this,  
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant  
to me."

"He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to whom  
at first

He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,  
push'd

Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught  
his hand,

Held it, and there, half-hidden by him,  
stood,

Until the King espied him, saying to him,  
"Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and true  
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail;"  
and Bors,

"Ask me not, for I may not speak of it:  
I saw it;" and the tears were in his eyes.

"Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for  
the rest

Spake but of sundry perils in the storm;  
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,  
Our Arthur kept his best until the last;

"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the King,  
"my friend,

Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd for  
thee?"

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lancelot,  
with a groan;

"O King!"—and when he paused, me-  
thought I spied

A dying fire of madness in his eyes—

"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,  
Happier are those that welter in their sin,

Swine in the mud, that cannot see for  
slime,

Slime of the ditch: but in me lived a sin  
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,  
Noble, and knightly in me twined and  
clung

Round that one sin, until the wholesome  
flower

And poisonous grew together, each as each,  
Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy  
knights

Sware, I sware with them only in the hope  
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail  
They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I  
spake

To one most holy saint, who wept and said,  
That save they could be pluck'd asunder,  
all

My quest were but in vain; to whom I  
vow'd

That I would work according as he will'd.  
And forth I went, and while I yearn'd and  
strove

To tear the twain asunder in my heart,  
My madness came upon me as of old,  
And whipt me into waste fields far away;  
There was I beaten down by little men,  
Mean knights, to whom the moving of my  
sword

And shadow of my spear had been enow  
To scare them from me once; and then I  
came

All in my folly to the naked shore,  
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse  
grasses grew;

But such a blast, my King, began to blow,  
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,  
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,  
Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the  
sea

Drove like a cataract, and all the sand  
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens  
Were shaken with the motion and the  
sound.

And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a  
boat,

Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a chain;  
And in my madness to myself I said,

"I will embark and I will lose myself,  
And in the great sea wash away my sin."  
I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.

## THE HOLY GRAIL

Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,  
And with me drove the moon and all the  
stars;

And the wind fell, and on the seventh night  
I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,  
And felt the boat shock earth, and looking  
up,

Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,  
A castle like a rock upon a rock,  
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,  
And steps that met the breaker! there was  
none

Stood near it but a lion on each side  
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.  
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the  
stairs.

There drew my sword. With sudden-  
flaring manes

Those two great beasts rose upright like a  
man,

Each gript a shoulder, and I stood between;  
And, when I would have smitten them,  
heard a voice,

'Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the  
beasts

Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with  
violence

The sword was dash'd from out my hand,  
and fell.

And up into the sounding hall I past;  
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,  
No bench nor table, painting on the wall  
Or shield of knight; only the rounded moon  
Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.

But always in the quiet house I heard,  
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,  
A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower  
To the eastward: up I climb'd a thousand  
steps

With pain: as in a dream I seem'd to climb  
For ever: at the last I reach'd a door,  
A light was in the crannies, and I heard,  
'Glory and joy and honour to our Lord  
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail.'

Then in my madness I essay'd the door;  
It gave; and thro' a stormy glare, a heat  
As from a seventimes-heated furnace, I,  
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,  
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd  
away—

O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,

All pall'd in crimson samite, and around  
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and  
eyes.

And but for all my madness and my sin,  
And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw  
That which I saw; but what I saw was  
veil'd

And cover'd; and this Quest was not for  
me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot  
left

The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—nay,  
Brother, I need not tell thee foolish  
words,—

A reckless and irreverent knight was he,  
Now bolden'd by the silence of his King,—  
Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my liege,"  
he said,

"Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?  
When have I stinted stroke in foughten  
field?

But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,  
Thy holy nun and thou have driven men  
mad,

Yea, made our mightiest madder than our  
least.

But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,  
I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,  
And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,  
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,  
Henceforward."

"Deafer," said the blameless King,  
"Gawain, and blinder unto holy things  
Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,  
Being too blind to have desire to see.  
But if indeed there came a sign from  
heaven,

Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Percivale,  
For these have seen according to their  
sight.

For every fiery prophet in old times,  
And all the sacred madness of the bard,  
When God made music thro' them, could  
but speak

His music by the framework and the chord;  
And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

"Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot: never  
yet



## THE HOLY GRAIL

Could all of true and noble in knight and man

Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,  
With such a closeness, but apart there grew,

Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,  
Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;

Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

“And spake I not too truly, O my knights?

Was I too dark a prophet when I said  
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,  
That most of them would follow wandering fires,

Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me and gone,

And left me gazing at a barren board,  
And a lean Order—scarce return’d a tithe—

And out of those to whom the vision came  
My greatest hardly will believe he saw;  
Another hath beheld it afar off,  
And leaving human wrongs to right themselves,

Cares but to pass into the silent life.  
And one hath had the vision face to face,  
And now his chair desires him here in vain,  
However they may crown him elsewhere.

“And some among you held, that if the King

Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow:

Not easily, seeing that the King must guard

That which he rules, and is but as the hind  
To whom a space of land is given to plow.  
Who may not wander from the allotted field

Before his work be done; but, being done,  
Let visions of the night or of the day  
Come, as they will; and many a time they

come,  
Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,

This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,

This air that smites his forehead is not air

But vision—yea, his very hand and foot—  
In moments when he feels he cannot die,  
And knows himself no vision to himself,  
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One  
Who rose again: ye have seen what ye have seen.”

“So spake the King: I knew not all he meant.”

### PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

KING ARTHUR made new knights to fill the gap

Left by the Holy Quest; and as he sat  
In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors  
Were softly sunder’d, and thro’ these a youth,

Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the fields  
Past, and the sunshine came along with him.

“Make me thy knight, because I know,  
Sir King,

All that belongs to knighthood, and I love.”  
Such was his cry: for having heard the King

Had let proclaim a tournament—the prize  
A golden circlet and a knightly sword,  
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won  
The golden circlet, for himself the sword:  
And there were those who knew him near the King,

And promised for him: and Arthur made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of the isles—

But lately come to his inheritance,  
And lord of many a barren isle was he—  
Riding at noon, a day or twain before,  
Across the forest call’d of Dean, to find  
Caerleon and the King, had felt the sun  
Beat like a strong knight on his helm, and reel’d

Almost to falling from his horse; but saw  
Near him a mound of even-sloping side,  
Whereon a hundred stately beeches grew,  
And here and there great hollies under them;

But for a mile all round was open space,

## PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

And fern and heath: and slowly Pelleas  
drew  
To that dim day, then binding his good  
horse

To a tree, cast himself down; and as he lay  
At random looking over the brown earth  
Thro' that green-glooming twilight of the  
grove,

It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern without  
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,  
So that his eyes were dazzled looking at it.  
Then o'er it crost the dimness of a cloud  
Floating, and once the shadow of a bird  
Flying, and then a fawn; and his eyes  
closed.

And since he loved all maidens, but no  
maid

In special, half-awake he whisper'd,  
'Where?

O where? I love thee, tho' I know thee not.  
For fair thou art and pure as Guinevere,  
And I will make thee with my spear and  
sword

As famous—O my Queen, my Guinevere,  
For I will be thine Arthur when we meet.'

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of talk  
And laughter at the limit of the wood,  
And glancing thro' the hoary boles, he saw,  
Strange as to some old prophet might have  
seem'd

A vision hovering on a sea of fire,  
Damsels in divers colours like the cloud  
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them  
On horses, and the horses richly trapt  
Breast-high in that bright line of bracken  
stood:

And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,  
And one was pointing this way, and one  
that,  
Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,  
And loosed his horse, and led him to the  
light.

There she that seem'd the chief among  
them said,

'In happy time behold our pilot-star!  
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we ride,  
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the knights  
There at Caerleon, but have lost our way:

To right? to left? straight forward? back  
again?

Which? tell us quickly.'

Pelleas gazing thought,  
'Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?'

For large her violet eyes look'd, and her  
bloom

A rosy dawn kindled in stainless heavens,  
And round her limbs, mature in woman-  
hood;

And slender was her hand and small her  
shape;

And but for those large eyes, the haunts of  
scorn,

She might have seem'd a toy to trifle  
with,

And pass and care no more. But while he  
gazed

The beauty of her flesh abash'd the boy,  
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul:

For as the base man, judging of the good,  
Puts his own baseness in him by default

Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend  
All the young beauty of his own soul to  
hers,

Believing her; and when she spake to him,  
Stammer'd, and could not make her a  
reply.

For out of the waste islands had he come,  
Where saving his own sisters he had known  
Scarce any but the women of his isles,  
Rough wives, that laugh'd and scream'd  
against the gulls,

Makers of nets, and living from the sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the lady  
round

And look'd upon her people; and as when  
A stone is flung into some sleeping tarn,  
The circle widens till it lip the marge,  
Spread the slow smile thro' all her com-  
pany.

Three knights were thereamong; and they  
too smiled,

Scorning him; for the lady was Ettarre,  
And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said, 'O wild and of the woods,  
Knowest thou not the fashion of our  
speech?

## PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

Or have the Heavens but given thee a fair  
face,  
Lacking a tongue?’

‘O damsel,’ answer’d he,  
‘I woke from dreams; and coming out of  
gloom  
Was dazzled by the sudden light, and crave  
Pardon: but will ye to Caerleon? I  
Go likewise: shall I lead you to the King?’

‘Lead then,’ she said; and thro’ the  
woods they went.  
And while they rode, the meaning in his  
eyes,

His tenderness of manner, and chaste awe,  
His broken utterances and bashfulness,  
Were all a burthen to her, and in her heart  
She mutter’d, ‘I have lighted on a fool,  
Raw, yet so stale!’ But since her mind was  
bent

On hearing, after trumpet blown, her name  
And title, ‘Queen of Beauty,’ in the lists  
Cried—and beholding him so strong, she  
thought

That peradventure he will fight for me,  
And win the circlet: therefore flatter’d  
him,

Being so gracious, that he wellnigh deem’d  
His wish by hers was echo’d; and her  
knights

And all her damsels too were gracious to  
him,  
For she was a great lady.

And when they reach’d  
Caerleon, ere they past to lodging, she,  
Taking his hand, ‘O the strong hand,’ she  
said,

‘See! look at mine! but wilt thou fight for  
me,

And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,  
That I may love thee?’

Then his helpless heart  
Leapt, and he cried, ‘Ay! wilt thou if I  
win?’

‘Ay, that will I,’ she answer’d, and she  
laugh’d,

And straitly nipt the hand, and flung it  
from her;

Then glanced askew at those three knights  
of hers,  
Till all her ladies laugh’d along with her.

‘O happy world,’ thought Pelleas, ‘all,  
meseems,  
Are happy; I the happiest of them all.’

Nor slept that night for pleasure in his  
blood,

And green wood-ways, and eyes among  
the leaves;

Then being on the morrow knighted, sware  
To love one only. And as he came away,  
The men who met him rounded on their  
heels

And wonder’d after him, because his face  
Shone like the countenance of a priest of  
old

Against the flame about a sacrifice  
Kindled by fire from heaven: so glad  
was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets, and  
strange knights

From the four winds came in: and each one  
sat,

Tho’ served with choice from air, land,  
stream, and sea,

Oft in mid-banquet measuring with his  
eyes

His neighbour’s make and might: and  
Pelleas look’d

Noble among the noble, for he dream’d  
His lady loved him, and he knew himself  
Loved of the King: and him his new-made  
knight

Worshipt, whose lightest whisper moved  
him more

Than all the ranged reasons of the world.

Then blush’d and brake the morning of  
the jousts,

And this was call’d ‘The Tournament of  
Youth:’

For Arthur, loving his young knight, with-  
held

His older and his mightier from the lists,  
That Pelleas might obtain his lady’s love,

According to her promise, and remain  
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had the  
jousts

## PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

Down in the flat field by the shore of Usk  
Holden: the gilded parapets were crown'd  
With faces, and the great tower fill'd with  
eyes

Up to the summit, and the trumpets blew.  
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the field  
With honour: so by that strong hand of his  
The sword and golden circlet were  
achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved: the  
heat  
Of pride and glory fired her face; her eye  
Sparkled; she caught the circlet from his  
lance,  
And there before the people crown'd her-  
self:  
So for the last time she was gracious to  
him.

Then at Caerleon for a space—her look  
Bright for all others, cloudier on her  
knight—

Linger'd Ettarre: and seeing Pelleas droop,  
Said Guinevere, 'We marvel at thee much,  
O damsel, wearing this unsunny face  
To him who won thee glory!' And she  
said,  
'Had ye not held your Lancelot in your  
bower,  
My Queen, he had not won.' Whereat the  
Queen,  
As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,  
Glanced down upon her, turn'd and went  
her way.

But after, when her damsels, and herself,  
And those three knights all set their faces  
home,  
Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw him  
cried,  
'Damsels—and yet I should be shamed to  
say it—  
I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him back  
Among yourselves. Would rather that we  
had  
Some rough old knight who knew the  
worldly way,  
Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride  
And jest with: take him to you, keep him  
off,

And pamper him with papmeat, if ye will,  
Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,  
Such as the wholesome mothers tell their  
boys.

Nay, should ye try him with a merry one  
To find his mettle, good: and if he fly us,  
Small matter! let him.' This her damsels  
heard,

And mindful of her small and cruel hand,  
They, closing round him thro' the journey  
home,

Acted her hest, and always from her side  
Restrain'd him with all manner of device,  
So that he could not come to speech with  
her.

And when she gain'd her castle, upsprang  
the bridge,

Down rang the grate of iron thro' the  
groove,

And he was left alone in open field.

'These be the ways of ladies,' Pelleas  
thought,

'To those who love them, trials of our faith.  
Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,  
For loyal to the uttermost am I.'

So made his moan; and, darkness falling,  
sought

A priory not far off, there lodged, but rose  
With morning every day, and, moist or dry,  
Full-arm'd upon his charger all day long  
Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to him.

And this persistence turn'd her scorn to  
wrath.

Then calling her three knights, she charged  
them, 'Out!

And drive him from the walls.' And out  
they came,

But Pelleas overthrew them as they dash'd  
Against him one by one; and these re-  
turn'd,

But still he kept his watch beneath the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate; and  
once,

A week beyond, while walking on the walls  
With her three knights, she pointed down-  
ward, 'Look,

He haunts me—I cannot breathe—besieges  
me;

## PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

Down! strike him! put my hate into your strokes,  
And drive him from my walls.' And down they went,  
And Pelleas overthrew them one by one;  
And from the tower above him cried Ettarre,  
'Bind him, and bring him in.'

He heard her voice;  
Then let the strong hand, which had overthrown  
Her minion-knights, by those he overthrew  
Be bounden straight, and so they brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre, the sight  
Of her rich beauty made him at one glance  
More bondsman in his heart than in his bonds.  
Yet with good cheer he spake, 'Behold me,  
Lady,  
A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;  
And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,  
Content am I so that I see thy face  
But once a day: for I have sworn my vows,  
And thou hast given thy promise, and I know  
That all these pains are trials of my faith,  
And that thyself, when thou hast seen me strain'd  
And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length  
Yield me thy love and know me for thy knight.'

Then she began to rail so bitterly,  
With all her damsels, he was stricken mute;  
But when she mock'd his vows and the great King,  
Lighted on words: 'For pity of thine own self,  
Peace, Lady, peace: is he not thine and mine?'  
'Thou fool,' she said, 'I never heard his voice  
But long'd to break away. Unbind him now,  
And thrust him out of doors; for save he be  
Fool to the midmost marrow of his bones,  
He will return no more.' And those, her three,

Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again  
She call'd them, saying, 'There he watches yet,  
There like a dog before his master's door!  
Kick'd, he returns: do ye not hate him, ye?  
Ye know yourselves: how can ye bide at peace,  
Affronted with his fulsome innocence?  
Are ye but creatures of the board and bed,  
No men to strike? Fall on him all at once,  
And if ye slay him I reckon not: if ye fail,  
Give ye the slave mine order to be bound,  
Bind him as heretofore, and bring him in:  
It may be ye shall slay him in his bonds.'

She spake; and at her will they couch'd their spears,  
Three against one: and Gawain passing by,  
Bound upon solitary adventure, saw  
Low down beneath the shadow of those towers  
A villainy, three to one: and thro' his heart  
The fire of honour and all noble deeds  
Flash'd, and he call'd, 'I strike upon thy side—  
The caitiffs!' 'Nay,' said Pelleas, 'but forbear;  
He needs no aid who doth his lady's will.'

So Gawain, looking at the villainy done,  
Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness  
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog, withheld  
A moment from the vermin that he sees  
Before him, shivers, ere he springs and kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to three;  
And they rose up, and bound, and brought him in.  
Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas, burn'd  
Full on her knights in many an evil name  
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten hound:  
'Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit to touch,

## PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

Far less to bind, your victor, and thrust  
him out,  
And let who will release him from his  
bonds.  
And if he comes again—there she brake  
short;  
And Pelleas answer'd, 'Lady, for indeed  
I loved you and I deem'd you beautiful,  
I cannot brook to see your beauty marr'd  
Thro' evil spite: and if ye love me not,  
I cannot bear to dream you so forsworn:  
I had liefer ye were worthy of my love,  
Than to be loved again of you—farewell;  
And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my love,  
Vex not yourself: ye will not see me more.'

While thus he spake, she gazed upon the  
man  
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds, and  
thought,  
'Why have I push'd him from me? this  
man loves,  
If love there be: yet him I loved not. Why?  
I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that in him  
Asomething—was it nobler than myself?—  
Seem'd my reproach? He is not of my kind.  
He could not love me, did he know me well.  
Nay, let him go—and quickly.' And her  
knights  
Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden out  
of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed him  
from his bonds,  
And flung them o'er the walls; and after-  
ward,  
Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's rag,  
'Faith of my body,' he said, 'and art thou  
not—  
Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur  
made  
Knight of his table; yea and he that won  
The circlet? wherefore hast thou so de-  
famed  
Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest,  
As let these caitiffs on thee work their will?'

And Pelleas answer'd, 'O, their wills are  
hers  
For whom I won the circlet; and mine,  
hers,

Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,  
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mockery  
now,  
Other than when I found her in the woods;  
And tho' she hath me bounden but in spite,  
And all to flout me, when they bring me in,  
Let me be bounden, I shall see her face;  
Else must I die thro' mine unhappiness.'

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho' in  
scorn,  
'Why, let my lady bind me if she will,  
And let my lady beat me if she will:  
But an she send her delegate to thrall  
These fighting hands of mine—Christ kill  
me then  
But I will slice him handless by the wrist,  
And let my lady sear the stump for him,  
Howl as he may. But hold me for your  
friend:  
Come, ye know nothing: here I pledge my  
troth,  
Yea, by the honour of the Table Round,  
I will be leal to thee and work thy work,  
And tame thy jailing princess to thine  
hand.  
Lend me thine horse and arms, and I will  
say  
That I have slain thee. She will let me in  
To hear the manner of thy fight and fall;  
Then, when I come within her counsels,  
then  
From prime to vespers will I chant thy  
praise  
As prowtest knight and truest lover, more  
Than any have sung thee living, till she long  
To have thee back in lusty life again,  
Not to be bound, save by white bonds and  
warm,  
Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now thy  
horse  
And armour: let me go: be comforted:  
Give me three days to melt her fancy, and  
hope  
The third night hence will bring thee news  
of gold.'

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all his  
arms,  
Saving the goodly sword, his prize, and  
took

## PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

Gawain's, and said, 'Betray me not, but help—  
Art thou not he whom men call light-of-love?'

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be so light.'

Then bounded forward to the castle walls,  
And raised a bugle hanging from his neck,  
And winded it, and that so musically  
That all the old echoes hidden in the wall  
Rang out like hollow woods at hunting-tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the tower;  
'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves thee not.'

But Gawain lifting up his vizor said,  
'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's court,  
And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye hate:  
Behold his horse and armour. Open gates,  
And I will make you merry.'

And down they ran,  
Her damsels, crying to their lady, 'Lo!  
Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that hath  
His horse and armour: will ye let him in?  
He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of the court,  
Sir Gawain—there he waits below the wall,  
Blowing his bugle as who should say him nay.'

And so, leave given, straight on thro'  
open door  
Rode Gawain, whom she greeted courteously.

'Dead, is it so?' she ask'd. 'Ay, ay,' said he,  
'And oft in dying cried upon your name.'  
'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good knight,  
But never let me bide one hour at peace.'  
'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and you be fair enow:

But I to your dead man have given my troth,  
That whom ye loathe, him will I make you love.'

So those three days, aimless about the land,  
Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering  
Waited, until the third night brought a moon

With promise of large light on woods and ways.

Hot was the night and silent; but a sound  
Of Gawain ever coming, and this lay—  
Which Pelleas had heard sung before the Queen,  
And seen her sadden listening—vext his heart,  
And marr'd his rest—'A worm within the rose.'

'A rose, but one, none other rose had I,  
A rose, one rose, and this was wondrous fair,  
One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth and sky,  
One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all mine air—  
I cared not for the thorns; the thorns were there.

'One rose, a rose to gather by and by,  
One rose, a rose, to gather and to wear,  
No rose but one—what other rose had I?  
One rose, my rose; a rose that will not die,—  
He dies who loves it,—if the worm be there.'

This tender rhyme, and evermore the doubt,  
'Why lingers Gawain with his golden news?'  
So shook him that he could not rest, but rode  
Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his horse  
Hard by the gates. Wide open were the gates,  
And no watch kept; and in thro' these he past,  
And heard but his own steps, and his own heart  
Beating, for nothing moved but his own self,  
And his own shadow. Then he crost the court,  
And spied not any light in hall or bower,  
But saw the postern portal also wide

## PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

Yawning; and up a slope of garden, all  
Of roses white and red, and brambles mixt  
And overgrowing them, went on, and  
found,  
Here too, all hush'd below the mellow  
moon,  
Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave  
Came lightening downward, and so spilt  
itself  
Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavilions  
rear'd  
Above the bushes, gilden-peak: in one,  
Red after revel, droned her lurdane knights  
Slumbering, and their three squires across  
their feet:  
In one, their malice on the placid lip  
Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her damsels  
lay:  
And in the third, the circlet of the jousts  
Bound on her brow, were Gawain and  
Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the leaf  
To find a nest and feels a snake, he drew:  
Back, as a coward slinks from what he fears  
To cope with, or a traitor proven, or hound  
Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame  
Creep with his shadow thro' the court  
again,  
Fingering at his sword-handle until he  
stood  
There on the castle-bridge once more, and  
thought,  
'I will go back, and slay them where they  
lie.'

And so went back, and seeing them yet  
in sleep  
Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the holy sleep,  
Your sleep is death,' and drew the sword,  
and thought,  
'What! slay a sleeping knight? the King  
hath bound  
And sworn me to this brotherhood;' again,  
'Alas that ever a knight should be so false.'  
Then turn'd, and so return'd, and groaning  
laid  
The naked sword athwart their naked  
throats,

There left it, and them sleeping; and she  
lay,  
The circlet of the tourney round her brows,  
And the sword of the tourney across her  
throat.

And forth he past, and mounting on his  
horse  
Stared at her towers that, larger than them-  
selves  
In their own darkness, throng'd into the  
moon.  
Then crush'd the saddle with his thighs,  
and clench'd  
His hands, and madden'd with himself and  
moan'd:

'Would they have risen against me in  
their blood  
At the last day? I might have answer'd  
them  
Even before high God. O towers so strong,  
Huge, solid, would that even while I gaze  
The crack of earthquake shivering to your  
base  
Split you, and Hell burst up your harlot  
roofs  
Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and thro'  
within,  
Black as the harlot's heart—hollow as a  
skull!  
Let the fierce east scream thro' your eyelet-  
holes,  
And whirl the dust of harlots round and  
round  
In dung and nettles! hiss, snake—I saw  
him there—  
Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell. Who  
yells  
Here in the still sweet summer night,  
but I—  
I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd her  
fool?  
Fool, beast—he, she, or I? myself most  
fool;  
Beast too, as lacking human wit—dis-  
graced,  
Dishonour'd all for trial of true love—  
Love?—we be all alike: only the King  
Hath made us fools and liars. O noble vows!  
O great and sane and simple race of brutes



## PELLEAS AND ETARRE

That own no lust because they have no  
law!  
For why should I have loved her to my  
shame?  
I loathe her, as I loved her to my shame.  
I never loved her, I but lusted for her—  
Away—'

He dash'd the rowel into his horse,  
And bounded forth and vanish'd thro' the  
night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch on her  
throat,  
Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd her-  
self  
To Gawain: 'Liar, for thou hast not slain  
This Pelleas! here he stood, and might  
have slain  
Me and thyself.' And he that tells the tale  
Says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd  
To Pelleas, as the one true knight on earth,  
And only lover; and thro' her love her life  
Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain.

But he by wild and way, for half the  
night,  
And over hard and soft, striking the sod  
From out the soft, the spark from off the  
hard,  
Rode till the star above the wakening sun,  
Beside that tower where Percivale was  
cowl'd,  
Glanced from the rosy forehead of the  
dawn.  
For so the words were flash'd into his heart  
He knew not whence or wherefore: 'O  
sweet star,  
Pure on the virgin forehead of the dawn!'  
And there he would have wept, but felt his  
eyes  
Harder and drier than a fountain bed  
In summer: thither came the village girls  
And linger'd talking, and they come no  
more  
Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it from  
the heights  
Again with living waters in the change  
Of seasons: hard his eyes; harder his heart  
Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs,  
that he,

Gasping, 'Of Arthur's hall am I, but here,  
Here let me rest and die,' cast himself  
down,  
And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep; so  
lay,  
Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain fired  
The hall of Merlin, and the morning star  
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame, and  
fell.

He woke, and being ware of some one  
nigh,  
Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,  
crying,  
'False! and I held thee pure as Guinevere.'

But Percivale stood near him and replied,  
'Am I but false as Guinevere is pure?  
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or being  
one  
Of our free-spoken Table hast not heard  
That Lancelot'—there he check'd himself  
and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as with one  
Who gets a wound in battle, and the sword  
That made it plunges thro' the wound  
again,  
And pricks it deeper: and he shrank and  
wail'd,  
'Is the Queen false?' and Percivale was  
mute.  
'Have any of our Round Table held their  
vows?'  
And Percivale made answer not a word.  
'Is the King true?' 'The King!' said Per-  
civale.  
'Why then let men couple at once with  
wolves.  
What! art thou mad?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,  
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his  
horse  
And fled: small pity upon his horse had he,  
Or on himself, or any, and when he met  
A cripple, one that held a hand for alms—  
Hunch'd as he was, and like an old dwarf-  
elm  
That turns its back on the salt blast, the  
boy

## PELLEAS AND ET TARRE

Paused not, but overrode him, shouting,  
 'False,  
 And false with Gawain!' and so left him  
 bruised  
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and  
 wood  
 Went ever streaming by him till the  
 gloom,  
 That follows on the turning of the world,  
 Darken'd the common path: he twitch'd  
 the reins,  
 And made his beast that better knew it,  
 swerve  
 Now off it and now on; but when he saw  
 High up in heaven the hall that Merlin  
 built,  
 Blackening against the dead-green stripes  
 of even,  
 'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd, 'ye build  
 too high.'

Not long thereafter from the city gates  
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,  
 Warm with a gracious parting from the  
 Queen,  
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star  
 And marvelling what it was: on whom the  
 boy,  
 Across the silent seeded meadow-grass  
 Borne, clash'd: and Lancelot, saying,  
 'What name hast thou  
 That ridest here so blindly and so hard?'  
 'No name, no name,' he shouted, 'a scourge  
 am I  
 To lash the treasons of the Table Round.'  
 'Yea, but thy name?' 'I have many names,'  
 he cried:  
 'I am wrath and shame and hate and evil  
 fame,  
 And like a poisonous wind I pass to blast  
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the  
 Queen.'  
 'First over me,' said Lancelot, 'shalt thou  
 pass.'  
 'Fight therefore,' yell'd the youth, and  
 either knight  
 Drew back a space, and when they closed,  
 at once  
 The weary steed of Pelleas floundering flung  
 His rider, who call'd out from the dark  
 field,

'Thou art false as Hell: slay me: I have no  
 sword.'  
 Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy lips—  
 and sharp;  
 But here will I disedge it by thy death.'  
 'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is to be  
 slain,'  
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the  
 fall'n,  
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then  
 spake:  
 'Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say thy  
 say.'

And Lancelot slowly rode his warhorse  
 back  
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while  
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark  
 field,  
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced that  
 both  
 Brake into hall together, worn and pale.  
 There with her knights and dames was  
 Guinevere.  
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot  
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas, him  
 Who had not greeted her, but cast himself  
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing. 'Have  
 ye fought?'  
 She ask'd of Lancelot. 'Ay, my Queen,' he  
 said.  
 'And thou hast overthrown him?' 'Ay, my  
 Queen.'  
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, 'O young  
 knight,  
 Hath the great heart of knighthood in thee  
 fail'd  
 So far thou canst not bide, unfrowardly,  
 A fall from *him*?' Then, for he answer'd  
 not,  
 'Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the Queen,  
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and let  
 me know.'  
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce  
 She quail'd; and he, hissing 'I have no  
 sword,'  
 Sprang from the door into the dark. The  
 Queen  
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on her;  
 And each foresaw the dolorous day to be:  
 And all talk died, as in a grove all song

## PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

Beneath the shadow of some bird of prey;  
Then a long silence came upon the hall,  
And Modred thought, 'The time is hard at  
hand.'

### THE LAST TOURNAMENT

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in his  
mood  
Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table  
Round,  
At Camelot, high above the yellowing  
woods,  
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.  
And toward him from the hall, with harp  
in hand,  
And from the crown thereof a carcanet  
Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize  
Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,  
Came Tristram, saying, 'Why skip ye so,  
Sir Fool?'

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding once  
Far down beneath a winding wall of rock  
Heard a child wail. A stump of oak half-  
dead,  
From roots like some black coil of carven  
snakes,  
Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro' mid  
air  
Bearing an eagle's nest: and thro' the tree  
Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro' the  
wind  
Pierced ever a child's cry: and crag and  
tree  
Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the perilous  
nest,  
This ruby necklace thrice around her neck,  
And all unscarr'd from beak or talon,  
brought  
A maiden babe; which Arthur pitying took,  
Then gave it to his Queen to rear: the  
Queen  
But coldly acquiescing, in her white arms  
Received, and after loved it tenderly,  
And named it Nestling; so forgot herself  
A moment, and her cares; till that young  
life  
Being smitten in mid heaven with mortal  
cold  
Past from her; and in time the carcanet

Vext her with plaintive memories of the  
child:

So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,  
'Take thou the jewels of this dead inno-  
cence,  
And make them, an thou wilt, a tourney-  
prize.'

To whom the King, 'Peace to thine  
eagle-borne  
Dead nestling, and this honour after death,  
Following thy will! but, O my Queen, I  
muse  
Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or zone  
Those diamonds that I rescued from the  
tarn,  
And Lancelot won, methought, for thee  
to wear.'

'Would rather you had let them fall,' she  
cried,  
'Plunge and be lost—ill-fated as they were,  
A bitterness to me!—ye look amazed,  
Not knowing they were lost as soon as  
given—  
Slid from my hands, when I was leaning out  
Above the river—that unhappy child  
Past in her barge: but rosier luck will go  
With these rich jewels, seeing that they  
came  
Not from the skeleton of a brother-slayer,  
But the sweet body of a maiden babe.  
Perchance—who knows?—the purest of  
thy knights  
May win them for the purest of my maids.'

She ended, and the cry of a great joust  
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the ways  
From Camelot in among the faded fields  
To furthest towers; and everywhere the  
knights  
Arm'd for a day of glory before the King.

But on the hither side of that loud morn  
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage ribb'd  
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals, his  
nose  
Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one hand  
off,  
And one with shatter'd fingers dangling  
lame,  
A churl, to whom indignantly the King,

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

'My churl, for whom Christ died, what  
evil beast  
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy face? or  
fiend?

Man was it who marr'd heaven's image in  
thee thus?'

'Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of  
splinter'd teeth,  
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with  
blunt stump  
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said the  
maim'd churl,

'He took them and he drave them to his  
tower—  
Some hold he was a table-knight of thine—  
A hundred goodly ones—the Red Knight,  
he—

Lord, I was tending swine, and the Red  
Knight

Brake in upon me and drave them to his  
tower;

And when I call'd upon thy name as one  
That doest right by gentle and by churl,  
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would out-  
right have slain,

Save that he sware me to a message, saying,  
"Tell thou the King and all his liars, that I  
Have founded my Round Table in the  
North,

And whatsoever his own knights have  
sworn

My knights have sworn the counter to it—  
and say

My tower is full of harlots, like his court,  
But mine are worthier, seeing they profess  
To be none other than themselves—and say  
My knights are all adulterers like his own,  
But mine are truer, seeing they profess  
To be none other; and say his hour is come,  
The heathen are upon him, his long lance  
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw."

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the sene-  
schal,

'Take thou my churl, and tend him  
curiously

Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be whole.  
The heathen—but that ever-climbing  
wave,

Hurl'd back again so often in empty foam,  
Hath lain for years at rest—and renegades,  
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion,  
whom

The wholesome realm is purged of other-  
where,

Friends, thro' your manhood and your  
falty,—now

Make their last head like Satan in the  
North.

My younger knights, new-made, in whom  
your flower

Waits to be solid fruit of golden deeds,  
Move with me toward their quelling, which  
achieved,

The loneliest ways are safe from shore to  
shore.

But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my place  
Enchain'd to-morrow, arbitrate the field;  
For wherefore shouldst thou care to mingle  
with it,

Only to yield my Queen her own again?  
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent: is it well?'

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd, 'It is  
well:

Yet better if the King abide, and leave  
The leading of his younger knights to me.  
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is well.'

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot follow'd  
him,

And while they stood without the doors,  
the King

Turn'd to him saying, 'Is it then so well?  
Or mine the blame that oft I seem as he  
Of whom was written, "A sound is in his  
ears"?'

The foot that loiter's, bidden go,—the  
glance

That only seems half-loyal to command,—  
A manner somewhat fall'n from rever-  
ence—

Or have I dream'd the bearing of our  
knights

Tells of a manhood ever less and lower?  
Or whence the fear lest this my realm,  
uprear'd,

By noble deeds at one with noble vows,  
From flat confusion and brute violences,  
Reel back into the beast, and be no more?'

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

He spoke, and taking all his younger knights,  
Down the slope city rode, and sharply turn'd  
North by the gate. In her high bower the Queen,  
Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,  
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not that she sigh'd.  
Then ran across her memory the strange rhyme  
Of bygone Merlin, 'Where is he who knows?  
From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'

But when the morning of a tournament,  
By these in earnest those in mockery call'd  
The Tournament of the Dead Innocence,  
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lancelot,  
Round whose sick head all night, like birds of prey,  
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd, arose,  
And down a streetway hung with folds of pure  
White samite, and by fountains running wine,  
Where children sat in white with cups of gold,  
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow sad steps  
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd chair.

He glanced and saw the stately galleries,  
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their Queen  
White-robed in honour of the stainless child,  
And some with scatter'd jewels, like a bank  
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of fire.  
He look'd but once, and vail'd his eyes again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a dream  
To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll  
Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts began:  
And ever the wind blew, and yellowing leaf  
And gloom and gleam, and shower and shorn plume

Went down it. Sighing wearily, as one  
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,  
When all the goodlier guests are past away,  
Sat their great umpire, looking o'er the lists.  
He saw the laws that ruled the tournament  
Broken, but spake not; once, a knight cast down

Before his throne of arbitration cursed  
The dead babe and the follies of the King;  
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,  
And show'd him, like a vermin in its hole,  
Modred, a narrow face: anon he heard  
The voice that billow'd round the barriers roar

An ocean-sounding welcome to one knight,  
But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,  
And armour'd all in forest green, whereon  
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,  
And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,  
With ever-scattering berries, and on shield  
A spear, a harp, a bugle—Tristram—late  
From overseas in Brittany return'd,  
And marriage with a princess of that realm,  
Isolt the White—Sir Tristram of the Woods—

Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometime with pain  
His own against him, and now yearn'd to shake

The burthen off his heart in one full shock  
With Tristram ev'n to death: his strong hands gript

And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,  
Until he groan'd for wrath—so many of those,

That ware their ladies' colours on the casque,

Drew from before Sir Tristram to the bounds,

And there with gibes and flickering mockeries

Stood, while he mutter'd, 'Craven crests!  
O shame!

What faith have these in whom they swear to love?

The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave, the gems,

Not speaking other word than 'Hast thou won?

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

Art thou the purest, brother? See, the hand  
Wherewith thou takest this, is red! to  
whom

Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's lan-  
guorous mood,

Made answer, 'Ay, but wherefore toss me  
this

Like a dry bone cast to some hungry  
hound?

Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy. Strength  
of heart

And might of limb, but mainly use and  
skill,

Are winners in this pastime of our King.

My hand—belike the lance hath dript  
upon it—

No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief  
knight,

Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,

Great brother, thou nor I have made the  
world;

Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine.'

And Tristram round the gallery made  
his horse

Caracole; then bow'd his homage, bluntly  
saying,

'Fair damsels, each to him who worships  
each

Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold  
This day my Queen of Beauty is not here.'

And most of these were mute, some  
anger'd, one

Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead,' and  
one,

'The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and  
mantle clung,

And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day  
Went glooming down in wet and weariness:

But under her black brows a swarthy one  
Laugh'd shrilly, crying, 'Praise the patient  
saints,

Our one white day of Innocence hath past,  
Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt. So

be it.

The snowdrop only, flowering thro' the  
year,

Would make the world as blank as Winter-  
tide.

Come—let us gladden their sad eyes, our  
Queen's

And Lancelot's, at this night's solemnity  
With all the kindlier colours of the field.'

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the feast  
Variously gay: for he that tells the tale

Liken'd them, saying, as when an hour of  
cold

Falls on the mountain in midsummer snows,  
And all the purple slopes of mountain

flowers

Pass under white, till the warm hour  
returns

With veer of wind, and all are flowers  
again;

So dame and damsel cast the simple white,  
And glowing in all colours, the live grass,

Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy,  
glanced

About the revels, and with mirth so loud  
Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the

Queen,

And wroth at Tristram and the lawless  
jousts,

Brake up their sports, then slowly to her  
bower

Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow morn,  
High over all the yellowing Autumn-tide,

Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall,  
Then Tristram saying, 'Why skip ye so,

Sir Fool?'

Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet  
replied,

'Belike for lack of wiser company;  
Or being fool, and seeing too much wit

Makes the world rotten, why, belike I skip  
To know myself the wisest knight of all.'

'Ay, fool,' said Tristram, 'but 'tis eating  
dry

To dance without a catch, a roundelay  
To dance to.' Then he twangled on his

harp,

And while he twangled little Dagonet stood  
Quiet as any water-sodden log

Stay'd in the wandering warble of a brook;  
But when the twangling ended, skipt again;

And being ask'd, 'Why skipt ye not, Sir  
Fool?'

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

Made answer, 'I had liefer twenty years  
Skip to the broken music of my brains  
Than any broken music thou canst make.'  
Then Tristram, waiting for the quip to  
come,

'Good now, what music have I broken,  
fool?'

And little Dagonet, skipping, 'Arthur, the  
King's;

For when thou playest that air with Queen  
Isolt,

Thou makest broken music with thy bride,  
Her daintier namesake down in Brittany—  
And so thou breakest Arthur's music too.'  
'Save for that broken music in thy brains,  
Sir Fool,' said Tristram, 'I would break thy  
head.

Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were  
o'er,

The life had flown, we sware but by the  
shell—

I am but a fool to reason with a fool—  
Come, thou art crabb'd and sour: but lean  
me down,

Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses' ears,  
And harken if my music be not true.

"Free love—free field—we love but  
while we may:

The woods are hush'd, their music is no  
more:

The leaf is dead, the yearning past away:  
New leaf, new life—the days of frost are  
o'er:

New life, new love, to suit the newer day:  
New loves are sweet as those that went  
before:

Free love—free field—we love but while  
we may."

'Ye might have moved slow—measure to  
my tune,

Not stood stockstill. I made it in the woods,  
And heard it ring as true as tested gold.'

But Dagonet with one foot poised in his  
hand,

'Friend, did ye mark that fountain yester-  
day

Made to run wine?—but this had run  
itself

All out like a long life to a sour end—  
And them that round it sat with golden  
cups

To hand the wine to whosoever came—  
The twelve small damosels white as Inno-  
cence,

In honour of poor Innocence the babe,  
Who left the gems which Innocence the  
Queen

Lent to the King, and Innocence the King  
Gave for a prize—and one of those white  
slips

Handed her cup and piped, the pretty one,  
"Drink, drink, Sir Fool," and thereupon  
I drank,

Spat—pish—the cup was gold, the draught  
was mud.'

And Tristram, 'Was it muddier than thy  
gibes?

Is all the laughter gone dead out of thee?—  
Not marking how the knighthood mock  
thee, fool—

"Fear God: honour the King—his one true  
knight—

Sole follower of the vows"—for here be  
they

Who knew thee swine enow before I came,  
Smuttier than blasted grain: but when the  
King

Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up  
It frightened all free fool from out thy heart;  
Which left thee less than fool, and less than  
swine,

A naked aught—yet swine I hold thee still,  
For I have flung thee pearls and find thee  
swine.'

And little Dagonet mincing with his feet,  
'Knight, an ye fling those rubies round my  
neck

In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast some  
touch

Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.  
Swine? I have wallow'd, I have wash'd—  
the world

Is flesh and shadow—I have had my day.  
The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind  
Hath foul'd me—an I wallow'd, then I  
wash'd—

I have had my day and my philosophies—

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

And thank the Lord I am King Arthur's fool.

Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses, rams and geese

Troop'd round a Paynim harper once, who thrumm'd

On such a wire as musically as thou  
Some such fine song—but never a king's fool.'

And Tristram, 'Then were swine, goats, asses, geese

The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard  
Had such a mastery of his mystery  
That he could harp his wife up out of hell.'

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of his foot,

'And whither harp'st thou thine? down! and thyself

Down! and two more: a helpful harper thou,

That harpest downward! Dost thou know the star

We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven?'

And Tristram, 'Ay, Sir Fool, for when our King

Was victor wellnigh day by day, the knights,

Glorying in each new glory, set his name  
High on all hills, and in the signs of heaven.'

And Dagonet answer'd, 'Ay, and when the land

Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set yourself

To babble about him, all to show your wit—

And whether he were King by courtesy,  
Or King by right—and so went harping down

The black king's highway, got so far, and grew

So witty that ye play'd at ducks and drakes  
With Arthur's vows on the great lake of fire.

Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the star?'

'Nay, fool,' said Tristram, 'not in open day.'

And Dagonet, 'Nay, nor will: I see it and hear.

It makes a silent music up in heaven,  
And I, and Arthur and the angels hear,

And then we skip.' 'Lo, fool,' he said, 'ye talk

Fool's treason: is the King thy brother fool?'

Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and shrill'd,

'Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of fools! Conceits himself as God that he can make

Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles, milk  
From burning spurge, honey from hornet-combs,

And men from beasts—Long live the king of fools!'

And down the city Dagonet danced away;

But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues  
And solitary passes of the wood

Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and the west.

Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt  
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore

Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood  
Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye

For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd, or flew.

Anon the face, as, when a gust hath blown,  
Unruffling waters re-collect the shape

Of one that in them sees himself, return'd;  
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,

Or ev'n a fall'n feather, vanish'd again.

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn  
Thro' many a league-long bower he rode.

At length

A lodge of intertwisted beechen-boughs  
Furze-cramm'd, and bracken-rooft, the

which himself

Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt  
Against a shower, dark in the golden grove

Appearing, sent his fancy back to where  
She lived a moon in that low lodge with

him:

Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish King,

With six or seven, when Tristram was away,



## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

And snatch'd her thence; yet dreading  
worse than shame

Her warrior Tristram, spake not any word,  
But bode his hour, devising wretchedness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram  
lookt

So sweet, that halting, in he past, and sank  
Down on a drift of foliage random-blown;  
But could not rest for musing how to  
smoothe

And sleek his marriage over to the Queen.  
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all  
The tonguesters of the court she had not  
heard.

But then what folly had sent him overseas  
After she left him lonely here? a name?  
Was it the name of one in Brittany,  
Isolt, the daughter of the King? 'Isolt  
Of the white hands' they call'd her: the  
sweet name

Allured him first, and then the maid her-  
self,

Who served him well with those white  
hands of hers,  
And loved him well, until himself had  
thought

He loved her also, wedded easily,  
But left her all as easily, and return'd.  
The black-blue Irish hair and Irish eyes  
Had drawn him home—what marvel? then  
he laid

His brows upon the drifted leaf and  
dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of Brittany  
Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,  
And show'd them both the ruby-chain,  
and both

Began to struggle for it, till his Queen  
Graspt it so hard, that all her hand was red.  
Then cried the Breton, 'Look, her hand is  
red!

These be no rubies, this is frozen blood,  
And melts within her hand—her hand is  
hot

With ill desires, but this I gave thee, look,  
Is all as cool and white as any flower.'  
Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and then  
A whimpering of the spirit of the child,  
Because the twain had spoil'd her carcanet.

He dream'd; but Arthur with a hundred  
spears .

Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,  
And many a glancing plash and sallow  
isle,

The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty marsh  
Glared on a huge machicolated tower  
That stood with open doors, whereout was  
roll'd

A roar of riot, as from men secure  
Amid their marshes, ruffians at their ease  
Among their harlot-brides, an evil song.

'Lo there,' said one of Arthur's youth, for  
there,

High on a grim dead tree before the tower,  
A goodly brother of the Table Round  
Swung by the neck: and on the boughs a  
shield

Showing a shower of blood in a field noir,  
And therebeside a horn, inflamed the  
knights

At that dishonour done the gilded spur,  
Till each would clash the shield, and blow  
the horn.

But Arthur waved them back. Alone he  
rode.

Then at the dry harsh roar of the great  
horn,

That sent the face of all the marsh aloft  
An ever upward-rushing storm and cloud  
Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight  
heard, and all,

Even to tipmost lance and topmost helm,  
In blood-red armour sallying, howl'd to  
the King,

'The teeth of Hell flay bare and gnash  
thee flat!—

Lo! art thou not that eunuch-hearted King  
Who fain had clipt free manhood from the  
world—

The woman-worshipper? Yea, God's  
curse, and I!

Slain was the brother of my paramour  
By a knight of thine, and I that heard her  
whine

And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,  
Swore by the scorpion-worm that twists in  
hell,

And stings itself to everlasting death,  
To hang whatever knight of thine I fought

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

And tumbled. Art thou King?—Look to thy life!’

He ended: Arthur knew the voice; the face  
Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the name  
Went wandering somewhere darkling in his mind.

And Arthur deign’d not use of word or sword,

But let the drunkard, as he stretch’d from horse

To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,  
Down from the causeway heavily to the swamp

Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching wave,

Heard in dead night along that table-shore,  
Drops flat, and after the great waters break  
Whitening for half a league, and thin themselves,

Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud,

From less and less to nothing; thus he fell  
Head-heavy; then the knights, who watch’d him, roar’d

And shouted and leapt down upon the fall’n;

There trampled out his face from being known,

And sank his head in mire, and slimed themselves:

Nor heard the King for their own cries, but sprang

Thro’ open doors, and swording right and left

Men, women, on their sodden faces, hurl’d  
The tables over and the wines, and slew  
Till all the rafters rang with woman-yells,  
And all the pavement stream’d with massacre:

Then, echoing yell with yell, they fired the tower,

Which half that autumn night, like the live North,

Red-pulsing up thro’ Alioth and Alcor,  
Made all above it, and a hundred meres

About it, as the water Moab saw  
Come round by the East, and out beyond them flush’d

The long low dune, and lazy-plunging sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore to shore,

But in the heart of Arthur pain was lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the red dream

Fled with a shout, and that low lodge return’d,

Mid-forest, and the wind among the boughs.

He whistled his good warhorse left to graze  
Among the forest greens, vaulted upon him,  
And rode beneath an ever-showering leaf,  
Till one lone woman, weeping near a cross,  
Stay’d him. ‘Why weep ye?’ ‘Lord,’ she said, ‘my man

Hath left me or is dead;’ whereon he thought—

‘What, if she hate me now? I would not this.

What, if she love me still? I would not that.

I know not what I would’—but said to her,  
‘Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate return,  
He find thy favour changed and love thee not’—

Then pressing day by day thro’ Lyonesse  
Last in a roky hollow, belling, heard

The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly hounds

Yelp at his heart, but turning, past and gain’d

Tintagil, half in sea, and high on land,  
A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,  
A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair  
And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the Queen.  
And when she heard the feet of Tristram grind

The spiring stone that scaled about her tower,

Flush’d, started, met him at the doors, and there

Belted his body with her white embrace,  
Crying aloud, ‘Not Mark—not Mark, my soul!

The footstep flutter’d me at first: not he:  
Catlike thro’ his own castle steals my Mark,  
But warrior-wise thou stridest thro’ his halls

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

Who hates thee, as I him—ev'n to the death.

My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark  
Quickened within me, and knew that thou wert nigh.'

To whom Sir Tristram smiling, 'I am here.  
Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine.'

And drawing somewhat backward she replied,

'Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n his own,

But save for dread of thee had beaten me,  
Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me somehow—Mark?

What rights are his that dare not strike for them?

Not lift a hand—not, tho' he found me thus!

But harken! have ye met him? hence he went

To-day for three days' hunting—as he said—

And so returns belike within an hour.

Mark's way, my soul!—but eat not thou with Mark,

Because he hates thee even more than fears;

Nor drink: and when thou passest any wood

Close vistor, lest an arrow from the bush  
Should leave me all alone with Mark and hell.

My God, the measure of my hate for Mark  
Is as the measure of my love for thee.'

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one by love,

Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and spake

To Tristram, as he knelt before her, saying,

'O hunter, and O blower of the horn,  
Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,

For, ere I mated with my shambling king,  
Ye twain had fallen out about the bride

Of one—his name is out of me—the prize,  
If prize she were—(what marvel—she could see)—

Thine, friend; and ever since my craven seeks

To wreck thee villainously: but, O Sir Knight,

What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last?'

And Tristram, 'Last to my Queen Paramount,

Here now to my Queen Paramount of love  
And loveliness—ay, lovelier than when first

Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse,  
Sailing from Ireland.'

Softly laugh'd Isolt;  
'Flatter me not, for hath not our great Queen

My dole of beauty trebled?' and he said,  
'Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,

And thine is more to me—soft, gracious, kind—

Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy lips  
Most gracious; but she, haughty, ev'n to him,

Lancelot; for I have seen him wan enow  
To make one doubt if ever the great Queen

Have yielded him her love.'

To whom Isolt,  
'Ah then, false hunter and false harper, thou

Who brakest thro' the scruple of my bond,  
Calling me thy white hind, and saying to me

That Guinevere had sinn'd against the highest,

And I—misynok'd with such a want of man—

That I could hardly sin against the lowest.'

He answer'd, 'O my soul, be comforted!  
If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings,

If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,  
Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning sin

That made us happy: but how ye greet me—fear

And fault and doubt—no word of that fond tale—

Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet memories

Of Tristram in that year he was away.'

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

And, saddening on the sudden, spake  
 Isolt,  
 'I had forgotten all in my strong joy  
 To see thee—yearnings?—ay! for, hour  
 by hour,  
 Here in the never-ended afternoon,  
 O sweeter than all memories of thee,  
 Deeper than any yearnings after thee  
 Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-smiling  
 seas,  
 Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of Britain  
 dash'd  
 Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,  
 Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss?  
 Wedded her?  
 Fought in her father's battles? wounded  
 there?  
 The King was all fulfill'd with grateful-  
 ness,  
 And she, my namesake of the hands, that  
 heal'd  
 Thy hurt and heart with unguent and  
 caress—  
 Well—can I wish her any huger wrong  
 Than having known thee? her too hast  
 thou left  
 To pine and waste in those sweet memories.  
 O were I not my Mark's, by whom all men  
 Are noble, I should hate thee more than  
 love.'

And Tristram, fondling her light hands,  
 replied,  
 'Grace, Queen, for being loved: she loved  
 me well.  
 Did I love her? the name at least I loved.  
 Isolt?—I fought his battles, for Isolt!  
 The night was dark; the true star set. Isolt!  
 The name was ruler of the dark—Isolt?  
 Care not for her! patient, and prayerful,  
 meek,  
 Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to God.'

And Isolt answer'd, 'Yea, and why not I?  
 Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,  
 Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell thee  
 now.  
 Here one black, mute midsummer night  
 I sat,  
 Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering  
 where,

Murmuring a light song I had heard thee  
 sing,  
 And once or twice I spake thy name aloud.  
 Then flash'd a levin-brand; and near me  
 stood,  
 In fuming sulphur blue and green, a  
 fiend—  
 Mark's way to steal behind one in the  
 dark—  
 For there was Mark: "He has wedded  
 her," he said,  
 Not said, but hiss'd it: then this crown of  
 towers  
 So shook to such a roar of all the sky,  
 That here in utter dark I swoon'd away,  
 And woke again in utter dark, and cried,  
 "I will flee hence and give myself to  
 God"—  
 And thou wert lying in thy new leman's  
 arms.'

Then Tristram, ever dallying with her  
 hand,  
 'May God be with thee, sweet, when old  
 and gray,  
 And past desire!' a saying that anger'd her.  
 "May God be with thee, sweet, when  
 thou art old,  
 And sweet no more to me!" I need Him  
 now.  
 For when had Lancelot utter'd aught so  
 gross  
 Ev'n to the swincherd's malkin in the  
 mast?  
 The greater man, the greater courtesy.  
 Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's  
 knight!  
 But thou, thro' ever harrying thy wild  
 beasts—  
 Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a lance  
 Becomes thee well—art grown wild beast  
 thyself.  
 How dardest thou, if lover, push me even  
 In fancy from thy side, and set me far  
 In the gray distance, half a life away,  
 Her to be loved no more? Unsay it, un-  
 swear!  
 Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,  
 Broken with Mark and hate and solitude,  
 Thy marriage and mine own, that I should  
 suck

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

Lies like sweet wines: lie to me: I believe.  
 Will ye not lie? not swear, as there ye kneel,  
 And solemnly as when ye sware to him,  
 The man of men, our King—My God, the  
     power  
 Was once in vows when men believed the  
     King!  
 They lied not then, who sware, and thro'  
     their vows  
 The King prevailing made his realm:—I  
     say,  
 Swear to me thou wilt love me ev'n when  
     old,  
 Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in  
     despair.'

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up and  
     down,  
 'Vows! did you keep the vow you made to  
     Mark  
 More than I mine? Lied, say ye? Nay, but  
     learnt,  
 The vow that binds too strictly snaps  
     itself—  
 My knighthood taught me this—ay, being  
     snapt—  
 We run more counter to the soul thereof  
 Than had we never sworn. I swear no  
     more.  
 I swore to the great King, and am for-  
     sworn.  
 For once—ev'n to the height—I honour'd  
     him.  
 "Man, is he man at all?" methought, when  
     first  
 I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and  
     beheld  
 That victor of the Pagan throned in hall—  
 His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a brow  
 Like hillsnow high in heaven, the steel-  
     blue eyes,  
 The golden beard that clothed his lips  
     with light—  
 Moreover, that weird legend of his birth,  
 With Merlin's mystic babble about his end  
 Amazed me; then, his foot was on a stool  
 Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me no  
     man,  
 But Michaël trampling Satan; so I sware,  
 Being amazed: but this went by—The  
     vows!

O ay—the wholesome madness of an  
     hour—  
 They served their use, their time; for  
     every knight  
 Believed himself a greater than himself,  
 And every follower eyed him as a God;  
 Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,  
 Did mightier deeds than elsewhere he had  
     done,  
 And so the realm was made; but then their  
     vows—  
 First mainly thro' that sullyng of our  
     Queen—  
 Began to gall the knighthood, asking  
     whence  
 Had Arthur right to bind them to himself?  
 Dropt down from heaven? wash'd up from  
     out the deep?  
 They fail'd to trace him thro' the flesh and  
     blood  
 Of our old kings: whence then? a doubtful  
     lord  
 To bind them by inviolable vows,  
 Which flesh and blood perforce would  
     violate:  
 For feel this arm of mine—the tide within  
 Red with free chase and heather-scented  
     air,  
 Pulsing full man; can Arthur make me  
     pure  
 As any maiden child? lock up my tongue  
 From uttering freely what I freely hear?  
 Bind me to one? The wide world laughs  
     at it.  
 And worldling of the world am I, and know  
 The ptarmigan that whitens ere his hour  
 Woos his own end; we are not angels here  
 Nor shall be: vows—I am woodman of the  
     woods,  
 And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale  
 Mock them: my soul, we love but while we  
     may;  
 And therefore is my love so large for thee,  
 Seeing it is not bounded save by love.

Here ending, he moved toward her, and  
     she said,  
 'Good: an I turn'd away my love for thee  
 To some one thrice as courteous as thy-  
     self—  
 For courtesy wins woman all as well

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

As valour may, but he that closes both  
Is perfect, he is Lancelot—taller indeed,  
Rosier and comelier, thou—but say I loved  
This knightliest of all knights, and cast  
thee back

Thine own small saw, "We love but while  
we may,"

Well then, what answer?"

He that while she spake,  
Mindful of what he brought to adorn her  
with,

The jewels, had let one finger lightly touch  
The warm white apple of her throat,  
replied,

'Press this a little closer, sweet, until—  
Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd—  
meat,

Wine, wine—and I will love thee to the  
death,

And out beyond into the dream to come.'

So then, when both were brought to full  
accord,

She rose, and set before him all he will'd;  
And after these had comforted the blood  
With meats and wines, and satiated their  
hearts—

Now talking of their woodland paradise,  
The deer, the dews, the fern, the founts,  
the lawns;

Now mocking at the much ungainliness,  
And craven shifts, and long crane legs of  
Mark—

Then Tristram laughing caught the harp,  
and sang:

'Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bend the  
brier!

A star in heaven, a star within the mere!

Ay, ay, O ay—a star was my desire,  
And one was far apart, and one was near:  
Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bow the  
grass!

And one was water and one star was fire,  
And one will ever shine and one will pass.  
Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that move the  
mere.'

Then in the light's last glimmer Tris-  
tram show'd  
And swung the ruby carcanet. She cried,

'The collar of some Order, which our King  
Hath newly founded, all for thee, my soul,  
For thee, to yield thee grace beyond thy  
peers.'

'Not so, my Queen,' he said, 'but the  
red fruit

Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-heaven,  
And won by Tristram as a tourney-prize,  
And hither brought by Tristram for his last  
Love-offering and peace-offering unto  
thee.'

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging round  
her neck,

Claspt it, and cried 'Thine Order, O my  
Queen!'

But, while he bow'd to kiss the jewell'd  
throat,

Out of the dark, just as the lips had touch'd,  
Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek—  
'Mark's way,' said Mark, and clove him  
thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and  
while he climb'd,  
All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping  
gloom,

The stairway to the hall, and look'd and  
saw

The great Queen's bower was dark,—  
about his feet

A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,  
'What art thou?' and the voice about his  
feet

Sent up an answer, sobbing, 'I am thy fool,  
And I shall never make thee smile again.'

### GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and  
sat

There in the holy house at Almesbury  
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,  
A novice: one low light betwixt them  
burn'd

Blur'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,  
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,  
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,  
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was  
still.

## GUINEVERE

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight  
 Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast  
 Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,  
 Ready to spring, waiting a chance: for this  
 He chill'd the popular praises of the King  
 With silent smiles of slow disparagement;  
 And tamper'd with the Lords of the White Horse,  
 Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and sought  
 To make disruption in the Table Round  
 Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds  
 Serving his traitorous end; and all his aims  
 Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when all the court,  
 Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the may,  
 Had been, their wont, a-maying and return'd,  
 That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,  
 Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall  
 To spy some secret scandal if he might,  
 And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best  
 Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court  
 The wildest and the worst; and more than this  
 He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by  
 Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand  
 Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,  
 So from the high wall and the flowering grove  
 Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,  
 And cast him as a worm upon the way;  
 But when he knew the Prince tho' marr'd with dust,  
 He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,  
 Made such excuses as he might, and these  
 Full knightly without scorn; for in those days  
 No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn;  
 But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in him

By those whom God had made full-limb'd and tall,  
 Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,  
 And he was answer'd softly by the King  
 And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot help  
 To raise the Prince, who rising twice or thrice  
 Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled,  
 and went:  
 But, ever after, the small violence done  
 Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,  
 As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long  
 A little bitter pool about a stone  
 On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told  
 This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd  
 Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,  
 Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries  
 'I shudder, some one steps across my grave;'  
 Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed  
 She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,  
 Would track her guilt until he found, and hers  
 Would be for evermore a name of scorn.  
 Henceforward rarely could she front in hall,  
 Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,  
 Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye:  
 Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the soul,  
 To help it from the death that cannot die,  
 And save it even in extremes, began  
 To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,  
 Beside the placid breathings of the King,  
 In the dead night, grim faces came and went  
 Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—  
 Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,  
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,  
 That keeps the rust of murder on the walls—  
 Held her awake: or if she slept, she dream'd

## GUINEVERE

An awful dream; for then she seem'd to stand  
 On some vast plain before a setting sun,  
 And from the sun there swiftly made at her  
 A ghastly something, and its shadow flew  
 Before it, till it touch'd her, and she turn'd—  
 When lo! her own, that broadening from  
 her feet,  
 And blackening, swallow'd all the land,  
 and in it  
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.  
 And all this trouble did not pass but grew;  
 Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless King,  
 And trustful courtesies of household life,  
 Became her bane; and at the last she said,  
 'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own  
 land,  
 For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
 And if we meet again, some evil chance  
 Will make the smouldering scandal break  
 and blaze  
 Before the people, and our lord the King.'  
 And Lancelot ever promised, but re-  
 main'd,  
 And still they met and met. Again she said,  
 'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee  
 hence.'  
 And then they were agreed upon a night  
 (When the good King should not be there)  
 to meet  
 And part for ever. Vivien, lurking, heard.  
 She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they  
 met  
 And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to  
 eye,  
 Low on the border of her couch they sat  
 Stammering and staring. It was their last  
 hour,  
 A madness of farewells. And Modred  
 brought  
 His creatures to the basement of the tower  
 For testimony; and crying with full voice  
 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,'  
 aroused  
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike  
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong,  
 and he fell  
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare  
 him off,  
 And all was still: then she, 'The end is  
 come,

And I am shamed for ever;' and he said,  
 'Mine be the shame; mine was the sin: but  
 rise,  
 And fly to my strong castle overseas:  
 There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,  
 There hold thee with my life against the  
 world.'  
 She answer'd, 'Lancelot, wilt thou hold  
 me so?  
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our fare-  
 wells.  
 Would God that thou couldst hide me  
 from myself!  
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and  
 thou  
 Unwedded: yet rise now, and let us fly,  
 For I will draw me into sanctuary,  
 And bide my doom.' So Lancelot got her  
 horse,  
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,  
 And then they rode to the divided way,  
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping: for he  
 past,  
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,  
 Back to his land; but she to Almesbury  
 Fled all night long by glimmering waste  
 and weald,  
 And heard the Spirits of the waste and  
 weald  
 Moan as she fled, or thought she heard  
 them moan:  
 And in herself she moan'd 'Too late, too  
 late!'  
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the  
 morn,  
 A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying high,  
 Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies a field  
 of death;  
 For now the Heathen of the Northern Sea,  
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of the  
 court,  
 Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land.'

And when she came to Almesbury she  
 spake  
 There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine enemies  
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,  
 Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask  
 Her name to whom ye yield it, till her time  
 'To tell you:' and her beauty, grace and  
 power,



## GUINEVERE

Wrought as a charm upon them, and they  
spared  
To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode  
For many a week, unknown, among the  
nuns;  
Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name,  
nor sought,  
Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,  
But communed only with the little maid,  
Who pleased her with a babbling heedless-  
ness

Which often lured her from herself; but now,  
This night, a rumour wildly blown about  
Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd the  
realm,  
And leagued him with the heathen, while  
the King

Was waging war on Lancelot: then she  
thought,  
'With what a hate the people and the King  
Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon her  
hands

Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd  
No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late! so late!  
What hour, I wonder, now?' and when she  
drew

No answer, by and by began to hum  
An air the nuns had taught her; 'Late, so  
late!'

Which when she heard, the Queen look'd  
up, and said,

'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,  
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may  
weep.'

Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

'Late, late, so late! and dark the night  
and chill!

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.  
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light had we: for that we do repent;  
And learning this, the bridegroom will  
relent.

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light: so late! and dark and chill the  
night!

O let us in, that we may find the light!  
Too late, too late: ye cannot enter now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is so  
sweet?

O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!  
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'

So sang the novice, while full passion-  
ately,  
Her head upon her hands, remembering  
Her thought when first she came, wept the  
sad Queen.

Then said the little novice prattling to her,

'O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;  
But let my words, the words of one so  
small,

Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,  
And if I do not there is penance given—  
Comfort your sorrows; for they do not  
flow

From evil done; right sure am I of that,  
Who see your tender grace and stateliness.  
But weigh your sorrows with our lord the  
King's,

And weighing find them less; for gone  
is he

To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot  
there,

Round that strong castle where he holds  
the Queen;

And Modred whom he left in charge of all,  
The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the King's  
grief

For his own self, and his own Queen, and  
realm,

Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours.  
For me, I thank the saints, I am not great.  
For if there ever come a grief to me  
I cry my cry in silence, and have done.

None knows it, and my tears have brought  
me good:

But even were the griefs of little ones  
As great as those of great ones, yet this  
grief

Is added to the griefs the great must bear,  
That howsoever much they may desire  
Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud:  
As even here they talk at Almesbury  
About the good King and his wicked  
Queen,

And were I such a King with such a Queen,  
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,  
But were I such a King, it could not be.'

## GUINEVERE

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the  
Queen,  
'Will the child kill me with her innocent  
talk?'

But openly she answer'd, 'Must not I,  
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,  
Grieve with the common grief of all the  
realm?'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'this is all woman's  
grief,  
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life  
Hath wrought confusion in the Table  
Round  
Which good King Arthur founded, years  
ago,  
With signs and miracles and wonders,  
there  
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.'

Then thought the Queen within herself  
again,  
'Will the child kill me with her foolish  
prate?'  
But openly she spake and said to her,  
'O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,  
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables  
Round,  
Or what of signs and wonders, but the  
signs  
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?'

To whom the little novice garrulously,  
'Yea, but I know: the land was full of signs  
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.  
So said my father, and himself was knight  
Of the great Table—at the founding of it;  
And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and he  
said

That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain  
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard  
Strange music, and he paused, and turning  
—there,

All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,  
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,  
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,  
He saw them—headland after headland  
flame

Far on into the rich heart of the west:  
And in the light the white mermaid  
swam,

And strong man-breasted things stood  
from the sea,  
And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the  
land,

To which the little elves of chasm and cleft  
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.  
So said my father—yea, and furthermore,  
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit  
woods,

Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy  
Come dashing down on a tall wayside  
flower,  
That shook beneath them, as the thistle  
shakes

When three gray linnets wrangle for the  
seed:

And still at evenings on before his horse  
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and  
broke

Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and  
broke

Flying, for all the land was full of life.  
And when at last he came to Camelot,  
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand  
Swung round the lighted lantern of the  
hall;

And in the hall itself was such a feast  
As never man had dream'd; for every  
knight

Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served  
By hands unseen; and even as he said  
Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the  
butts

While the wine ran: so glad were spirits  
and men

Before the coming of the sinful Queen.'

Then spake the Queen and somewhat  
bitterly,

'Were they so glad? ill prophets were they  
all,

Spirits and men: could none of them  
foresee,

Not even thy wise father with his signs  
And wonders, what has fall'n upon the  
realm?'

To whom the novice garrulously again,  
'Yea, one, a bard; of whom my father said,  
Full many a noble war-song had he sung,

## GUINEVERE

Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,  
Between the steep cliff and the coming  
wave;

And many a mystic lay of life and death  
Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,  
When round him bent the spirits of the  
hills

With all their dewy hair blown back like  
flame:

So said my father—and that night the bard  
Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the  
King

As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at  
those

Who call'd him the false son of Gorlois:  
For there was no man knew from whence  
he came;

But after tempest, when the long wave  
broke

All down the thundering shores of Bude  
and Bos,

There came a day as still as heaven, and  
then

They found a naked child upon the sands  
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea;  
And that was Arthur; and they foster'd him  
Till he by miracle was approved King:  
And that his grave should be a mystery  
From all men, like his birth; and could he  
find

A woman in her womanhood as great  
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,  
The twain together well might change the  
world.

But even in the middle of his song  
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the  
harp,

And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would  
have fall'n,

But that they stay'd him up; nor would he  
tell

His vision; but what doubt that he foresaw  
This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?

Then thought the Queen, 'Lo! they have  
set her on,

Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,  
To play upon me,' and bow'd her head nor  
spake.

Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd  
hands,

Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,  
Said the good nuns would check her gad-  
ding tongue

Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem  
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,  
Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales  
Which my good father told me, check me  
too

Nor let me shame my father's memory, one  
Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say  
Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he died,  
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers  
back,

And left me; but of others who remain,  
And of the two first-famed for courtesy—  
And pray you check me if I ask amiss—  
But pray you, which had noblest, while  
you moved

Among them, Lancelot or our lord the  
King?"

Then the pale Queen look'd up and  
answer'd her,

'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,  
Was gracious to all ladies, and the same  
In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and the King  
In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and these two  
Were the most nobly-manner'd men of all;  
For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be manners such  
fair fruit?

Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-  
fold

Less noble, being, as all rumour runs,  
The most disloyal friend in all the world.'

To which a mournful answer made the  
Queen:

'O closed about by narrowing nunnery-  
walls,

What knowest thou of the world, and all  
its lights

And shadows, all the wealth and all the  
woe?

If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,  
Were for one hour less noble than himself,  
Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,

## GUINEVERE

And weep for her who drew him to his doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray for both;

But I should all as soon believe that his, Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's, As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen.'

So she, like many another babbler, hurt Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where she would heal;

For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried,

'Such as thou art be never maiden more For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague And play upon, and harry me, petty spy And traitress.' When that storm of anger brake

From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose, White as her veil, and stood before the Queen

As tremulously as foam upon the beach Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly, And when the Queen had added 'Get thee hence,'

Fled frightened. Then that other left alone Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again, Saying in herself, 'The simple, fearful child Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt,

Simpler than any child, betrays itself. But help me, heaven, for surely I repent. For what is true repentance but in thought—

Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again The sins that made the past so pleasant to us;

And I have sworn never to see him more, To see him more.'

And ev'n in saying this, Her memory from old habit of the mind Went slipping back upon the golden days In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,

Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,

Ambassador, to lead her to his lord Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead Of his and her retinue moving, they, Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for the time

Was maytime, and as yet no sin was dream'd.)

Rode under groves that look'd a paradise Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro' the earth,

And on from hill to hill, and every day Beheld at noon in some delicious dale The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised For brief repast or afternoon repose By couriers gone before; and on again, Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw The Dragon of the great Pendragonship, That crown'd the state pavilion of the King,

Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such a trance,

And moving thro' the past unconsciously, Came to that point where first she saw the King

Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to find

Her journey done, glanced at him, thought him cold,

High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not like him,

'Not like my Lancelot'—while she brooded thus

And grew half-guilty in her thoughts again, There rode an armed warrior to the doors. A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery ran,

Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King.' She sat

Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed feet

Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors Rang coming, prone from off her seat she fell,

And grovell'd with her face against the floor:

There with her milkwhite arms and shadowy hair

## GUINEVERE

She made her face a darkness from the King:  
And in the darkness heard his armed feet  
Pause by her; then came silence, then a voice,  
Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's  
Denouncing judgment, but tho' changed,  
the King's:

'Liest thou here so low, the child of one  
I honour'd, happy, dead before thy shame?  
Well is it that no child is born of thee.  
The children born of thee are sword and  
fire,

Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,  
The craft of kindred and the Godless hosts  
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern  
Sea;

Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right  
arm,  
The mightiest of my knights, abode with  
me,

Have everywhere about this land of Christ  
In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.  
And knowest thou now from whence I  
come—from him,

From waging bitter war with him: and he,  
That did not shun to smite me in worse  
way,

Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,  
He spared to lift his hand against the King  
Who made him knight: but many a knight  
was slain;

And many more, and all his kith and kin  
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.  
And many more when Modred raised  
revolt,

Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave  
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.  
And of this remnant will I leave a part,  
True men who love me still, for whom I  
live,

To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,  
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.  
Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till my  
death.

Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies  
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my  
doom.

Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,  
That I the King should greatly care to live;

For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.  
Bear with me for the last time while I show,  
Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou hast  
sinn'd.

For when the Roman left us, and their law  
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways  
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a  
deed

Of prowess done redress'd a random  
wrong.

But I was first of all the kings who drew  
The knighthood-errant of this realm and  
all

The realms together under me, their Head,  
In that fair Order of my Table Round,  
A glorious company, the flower of men,  
To serve as model for the mighty world,  
And be the fair beginning of a time.

I made them lay their hands in mine and  
swear

To reverence the King, as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as  
their King,

To break the heathen and uphold the  
Christ,

To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,  
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To honour his own word as if his God's,  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
Until they won her; for indeed I knew  
Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable words  
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.  
And all this throve before I wedded thee,  
Believing, "lo mine helpmate, one to feel  
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy."

Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot;

Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt;  
Then others, following these my mightiest  
knights,

And drawing foul ensample from fair  
names,

Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite  
Of all my heart had destined did obtain,  
And all thro' thee! so that this life of mine

## GUINEVERE

I guard as God's high gift from scathe and wrong,  
 Not greatly care to lose; but rather think  
 How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,  
 To sit once more within his lonely hall,  
 And miss the wonted number of my knights,  
 And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds  
 As in the golden days before thy sin.  
 For which of us, who might be left, could speak  
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at thee?  
 And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk  
 Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,  
 And I should evermore be vexed with thee  
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.  
 For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love thy lord,  
 Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.  
 I am not made of so slight elements.  
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.  
 I hold that man the worst of public foes  
 Who either for his own or children's sake,  
 To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife  
 Whom he knows false, abide and rule the house:  
 For being thro' his cowardice allow'd  
 Her station, taken everywhere for pure,  
 She like a new disease, unknown to men,  
 Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,  
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps  
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse  
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.  
 Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns!  
 Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart  
 Than thou reseated in thy place of light,  
 The mockery of my people, and their bane.'

He paused, and in the pause she crept  
 an inch

Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.  
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.  
 Then waiting by the doors the warhorse neigh'd  
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

'Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,  
 I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,  
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die  
 To see thee, laying there thy golden head,  
 My pride in happier summers, at my feet.  
 The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,  
 The doom of treason and the flaming death,  
 (When first I learnt thee hidden here) is past.  
 The pang—which while I weigh'd thy heart with one  
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,  
 Made my tears burn—is also past—in part.  
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,  
 Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
 Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the rest.  
 But how to take last leave of all I loved?  
 O golden hair, with which I used to play  
 Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,  
 And beauty such as never woman wore,  
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee—  
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,  
 But Lancelot's: nay, they never were the King's.  
 I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,  
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine own flesh,  
 Here looking down on thine polluted, cries  
 "I loathe thee:" yet not less, O Guinevere,  
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life  
 So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.  
 Let no man dream but that I love thee still.  
 Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,  
 And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,  
 Hereafter in that world where all are pure  
 We two may meet before high God, and thou  
 Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know

## GUINEVERE

I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,  
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,  
I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I  
hence.

Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet  
blow:

They summon me their King to lead mine  
hosts

Far down to that great battle in the west,  
Where I must strike against the man they  
call

My sister's son—no kin of mine, who  
leagues

With Lords of the White Horse, heathen,  
and knights,

Traitors—and strike him dead, and meet  
myself

Death, or I know not what mysterious  
doom.

And thou remaining here wilt learn the  
event;

But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side; see thee no more—  
Farewell!

And while she grovell'd at his feet,  
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her  
neck,  
And in the darkness o'er her fallen head,  
Perceived the waving of his hands that  
blest.

Then, listening till those armed steps  
were gone,  
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish  
found

The casement: 'peradventure,' so she  
thought,

'If I might see his face, and not be seen.'  
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!  
And near him the sad nuns with each a light  
stood, and he gave them charge about the  
Queen,

To guard and foster her for evermore.  
And while he spake to these his helm was  
lower'd,

To which for crest the golden dragon clung  
Of Britain; so she did not see the face,  
Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,  
Wet with the mists and smitten by the  
lights,

The Dragon of the great Pendragonship  
Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.  
And even then he turn'd; and more and  
more

The moony vapour rolling round the King,  
Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,  
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him  
gray

And grayer, till himself became as mist  
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and  
cried aloud

'Oh Arthur!' there her voice brake sud-  
denly,

Then—as a stream that spouting from a  
cliff

Falls in mid air, but gathering at the base  
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the  
vale—

Went on in passionate utterance:

'Gone—my lord!  
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!  
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.  
Farewell? I should have answer'd his fare-  
well.

His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the  
King,

My own true lord! how dare I call him  
mine?

The shadow of another cleaves to me,  
And makes me one pollution: he, the King,  
Call'd me polluted: shall I kill myself?

What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,  
If soul be soul; nor can I kill my shame;  
No, nor by living can I live it down.

The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to  
months,

The months will add themselves and make  
the years,

The years will roll into the centuries,  
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.  
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.  
Let the world be; that is but of the world.  
What else? what hope? I think there was a  
hope,

Except he mock'd me when he spake of  
hope;

His hope he call'd it; but he never mocks,  
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.

## GUINEVERE

And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven

My wickedness to him, and left me hope  
That in mine own heart I can live down sin  
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
Before high God. Ah great and gentle lord,  
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint  
Among his warring senses, to thy knights—  
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took

Full easily all impressions from below,  
Would not look up, or half-despised the height

To which I would not or I could not climb—

I thought I could not breathe in that fine air  
That pure severity of perfect light—

I yearn'd for warmth and colour which I found

In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art,  
Thou art the highest and most human too,  
Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none  
Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?  
Now—ere he goes to the great Battle? none:  
Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
But now it were too daring. Ah my God,  
What might I not have made of thy fair world,

Had I but loved thy highest creature here?  
It was my duty to have loved the highest:  
It surely was my profit had I known:

It would have been my pleasure had I seen.  
We needs must love the highest when we see it,

Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand

Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes: she look'd and saw

The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,

'Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?'

Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns  
All round her, weeping; and her heart was loosed

Within her, and she wept with these and said,

'Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke

The vast design and purpose of the King.  
O shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,

Meek maidens, from the voices crying "shame."

I must not scorn myself: he loves me still.  
Let no one dream but that he loves me still.

So let me, if you do not shudder at me,  
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you;

Wear black and white, and be a nun like you,

Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts;

Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,

But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;  
Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your shrines;

Do each low office of your holy house;  
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole

To poor sick people, richer in His eyes  
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I;

And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own;

And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer  
The sombre close of that voluptuous day,

Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King.'

She said: they took her to themselves; and she

Still hoping, fearing 'is it yet too late?'  
Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess died.

Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,

And for the power of ministration in her,  
And likewise for the high rank she had borne,

Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess, lived

For three brief years, and there, an Abbess, past

To where beyond these voices there is peace.

*End of 'The Round Table'*



## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,  
First made and latest left of all the knights,  
Told, when the man was no more than a  
voice

In the white winter of his age, to those  
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other  
minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedi-  
vere,  
Who slowly paced among the slumbering  
host,  
Heard in his tent the moanings of the King :

‘I found Him in the shining of the stars,  
I mark’d Him in the flowering of His fields,  
But in His ways with men I find Him not.  
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.  
O me! for why is all around us here  
As if some lesser god had made the world,  
But had not force to shape it as he would,  
Till the High God behold it from beyond,  
And enter it, and make it beautiful?  
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,  
But that these eyes of men are dense and  
dim,

And have not power to see it as it is:  
Perchance, because we see not to the  
close;—

For I, being simple, thought to work His  
will,

And have but stricken with the sword in  
vain;

And all whereon I lean’d in wife and friend  
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm  
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.  
My God, thou hast forgotten me in my  
death:

Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall not  
die.’

Then, ere that last weird battle in the  
west,

There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain  
kill’d

In Lancelot’s war, the ghost of Gawain  
blown

Along a wandering wind, and past his ear  
Went shrilling, ‘Hollow, hollow all delight!

Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass  
away.

Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.  
And I am blown along a wandering wind,  
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight.’

And fainter onward, like wild birds that  
change

Their season in the night and wail their  
way

From cloud to cloud, down the long wind  
the dream

Shrill’d; but in going mingled with dim  
cries

Far in the moonlight haze among the hills,  
As of some lonely city sack’d by night,

When all is lost, and wife and child with  
wail

Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and  
call’d,

‘Who spake? A dream. O light upon the  
wind,

Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these  
dim cries

Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste  
and wild

Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?’

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and  
spake:

‘O me, my King, let pass whatever will,  
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the  
field;

But in their stead thy name and glory cling  
To all high places like a golden cloud

For ever: but as yet thou shalt not pass.  
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death

Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;  
And care not thou for dreams from him,

but rise—  
I hear the steps of Modred in the west,

And with him many of thy people, and  
knights

Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but  
grosser grown

Than heathen, spitting at their vows and  
thee.

Right well in heart they know thee for the  
King.

Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.’

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
 'Far other is this battle in the west  
 Whereto we move, than when we strove  
 in youth,  
 And brake the petty kings, and fought  
 with Rome,  
 Or thrust the heathen from the Roman  
 wall,  
 And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom  
 is mine  
 To war against my people and my knights.  
 The king who fights his people fights him-  
 self.  
 And they my knights, who loved me once,  
 the stroke  
 That strikes them dead is as my death  
 to me.  
 Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way  
 Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I  
 saw  
 One lying in the dust at Almesbury,  
 Hath folded in the passes of the world.'

Then rose the King and moved his host  
 by night,  
 And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by  
 league,  
 Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse—  
 A land of old upheaven from the abyss  
 By fire, to sink into the abyss again;  
 Where fragments of forgotten peoples  
 dwelt,  
 And the long mountains ended in a coast  
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away  
 The phantom circle of a moaning sea.  
 There the pursuer could pursue no more,  
 And he that fled no further fly the King;  
 And there, that day when the great light  
 of heaven  
 Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,  
 On the waste sand by the waste sea they  
 closed.  
 Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight  
 Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.  
 A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea:  
 Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it,  
 drew  
 Down with his blood, till all his heart was  
 cold  
 With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell

Confusion, since he saw not whom he  
 fought.  
 For friend and foe were shadows in the  
 mist,  
 And friend slew friend not knowing whom  
 he slew;  
 And some had visions out of golden youth,  
 And some beheld the faces of old ghosts  
 Look in upon the battle; and in the mist  
 Was many a noble deed, many a base,  
 And chance and craft and strength in single  
 fights,  
 And ever and anon with host to host  
 Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard  
 mail hewn,  
 Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands,  
 the crash  
 Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms, and  
 shrieks  
 After the Christ, of those who falling down  
 Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the  
 mist;  
 And shouts of heathen and the traitor  
 knights,  
 Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blas-  
 phemies,  
 Sweat, writhings, anguish, 'labouring of  
 the lungs  
 In that close mist, and cryings for the light,  
 Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail  
 Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death  
 Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that  
 shore,  
 Save for some whisper of the seething seas,  
 A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous  
 day  
 Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came  
 A bitter wind, clear from the North, and  
 blew  
 The mist aside, and with that wind the tide  
 Rose, and the pale King glanced across the  
 field  
 Of battle: but no man was moving there;  
 Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,  
 Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave  
 Brake in among dead faces, to and fro  
 Swaying the helpless hands, and up and  
 down  
 Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

And shiver'd brands that once had fought  
with Rome,  
And rolling far along the gloomy shores  
The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,  
And whiter than the mist that all day long  
Had held the field of battle was the King:

'Hearest thou this great voice that shakes  
the world,  
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we  
move,  
And beats upon the faces of the dead,  
My dead, as tho' they had not died for  
me?—  
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n  
Confusion, till I know not what I am,  
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King.  
Behold, I seem but King among the dead.'

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: 'My  
King,  
King everywhere! and so the dead have  
kings,  
There also will I worship thee as King.  
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live  
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he  
that brought  
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,  
Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine  
house.'

Then spake the King: 'My house hath  
been my doom.  
But call not thou this traitor of my house  
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with  
me.  
My house are rather they who swear my  
vows,  
Yea, even while they brake them, own'd  
me King.  
And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,  
When all the purport of my throne hath  
fall'd,  
That quick or dead thou holdest me for  
King.  
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;  
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see  
Yet, ere I pass.' And uttering this the King  
Made at the man: then Modred smote his  
liege

Hard on that helm which many a heathen  
sword

Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,  
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,  
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter sea;  
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,  
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their lord,  
King Arthur. Then, because his wound  
was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land:  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
vere:  
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
Whereof this world holds record. Such a  
sleep  
They sleep—the men I loved. I think  
that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
deeds,  
Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,—  
'Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
again  
To rule once more; but, let what will be,  
be,  
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest  
how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an  
arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I row'd  
across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known:

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere:  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring  
me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the  
helm—

A little thing may harm a wounded man;  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee  
word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he  
stept,  
And in the moon athwart the place of  
tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind  
sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
stepping down  
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran  
forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the  
hilt:  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond  
sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled as he  
stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the  
marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:

'Hast thou perform'd my mission which  
I gave?  
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint  
and pale:  
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy  
name,  
Not rendering true answer, as be seem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:  
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me  
word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the  
mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
thought;  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he  
smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of  
many men.  
What good should follow this, if this were  
done?  
What harm, undone? Deep harm to dis-  
obey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself?  
The King is sick, and knows not what he  
does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? But were this  
kept,

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty  
kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the  
deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."

So might some old man speak in the after-  
time

To all the people, winning reverence.

But now much honour and much fame  
were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spake King Arthur, breathing  
heavily:

'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in  
wrath:

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
I, laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou  
art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious  
hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee  
hence:

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the  
sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The  
great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the  
moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd  
in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter  
shock

By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
ful,

And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd  
him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spake King Arthur, drawing  
thicker breath:

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or  
seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the  
gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheel-  
ing him;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
ful,

That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd  
him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breath-  
ing hard:

'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were  
gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my  
weight,

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

And bear me to the margin; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half  
rose,  
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears, ➤  
And would have spoken, but he found not  
words;  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one  
knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid  
hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of  
tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted  
hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his  
bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the  
King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear,  
'Quick, quick!  
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'  
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to  
ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as  
he walk'd,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him like a  
goad.  
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and  
right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as  
he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed  
heels—  
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky  
barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them; and descending they were  
ware

That all the decks were dense with stately  
forms,  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—  
by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold: and  
from them rose  
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one  
comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the  
world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in  
the barge.'  
So to the barge they came. There those  
three Queens  
Put forth their hands, and took the King,  
and wept.  
But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
chafed his hands,  
And call'd him by his name, complaining  
loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against a brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face  
was white  
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing  
east;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with  
drops  
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd  
with dust;  
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
fringed his lips.  
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:  
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my  
eyes?

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble  
chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble  
knight.  
Such times have been not since the light  
that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole Round Table is dis-  
solved  
Which was an image of the mighty world,  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the  
years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other  
minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the  
barge:  
'The old order changeth, yielding place to  
new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the  
world.  
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I have  
done  
May He within himself make pure! but  
thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought  
by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let  
thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or  
goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call  
them friend?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of  
God.  
But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go  
(For all my mind is clouded with a  
doubt)—  
To the island-valley of Avilion;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,

Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard  
lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer  
sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous  
wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-  
breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the  
flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedi-  
vere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge of  
dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for ever-  
more,  
The stillness of the dead world's winter  
dawn  
Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The King  
is gone.'  
And therewithal came on him the weird  
rhyme,  
'From the great deep to the great deep he  
goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly  
clomb  
The last hard footstep of that iron crag;  
Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet,  
and cried,  
'He passes to be King among the dead,  
And after healing of his grievous wound  
He comes again; but—if he come no  
more—  
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black  
boat,  
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whcreat  
we gazed  
On that high day, when, clothed with living  
light,  
They stood before his throne in silence,  
friends  
Of Arthur, who should help him at his  
need?'

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

Then from the dawn it seem'd there  
came, but faint  
As from beyond the limit of the world,  
Like the last echo born of a great cry,  
Sounds, as if some fair city were one  
voice  
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and  
clomb

Ev'n to the highest he could climb, and  
saw,  
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,  
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the  
King,  
Down that long water opening on the deep  
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go  
From less to less and vanish into light.  
And the new sun rose bringing the new  
year.

## TO THE QUEEN

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,  
And loyal to thy land, as this to thee—  
Bear witness, that memorable day,  
When, pale as yet, and fever-worn, the  
Prince  
Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering life  
again  
From halfway down the shadow of the  
grave,  
Past with thee thro' thy people and their  
love,  
And London roll'd one tide of joy thro' all  
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of  
man  
And welcome! witness, too, the silent cry,  
The prayer of many a race and creed, and  
clime—  
Thunderless lightnings striking under sea  
From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,  
And that true North, whereof we lately  
heard  
A strain to shame us 'keep you to your-  
selves;  
So loyal is too costly! friends—your love  
Is but a burthen: loose the bond, and go.'  
Is this the tone of empire? here the faith  
That made us rulers? this, indeed, her  
voice  
And meaning, whom the roar of Hougou-  
mont  
Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven?  
What shock has fool'd her since, that she  
should speak  
So feebly? wealthier—wealthier—hour by  
hour!  
The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,  
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her  
seas?

There rang her voice, when the full city  
peal'd  
Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to their  
crown  
Are loyal to their own far sons, who love  
Our ocean-empire with her boundless  
homes  
For ever-broadening England, and her  
throne  
In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,  
That knows not her own greatness: if she  
knows  
And dreads it we are fall'n.—But thou,  
my Queen,  
Not for itself, but thro' thy living love  
For one to whom I made it o'er his grave  
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,  
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with  
Soul  
Rather than that gray king, whose name,  
a ghost,  
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from  
mountain peak,  
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still; or  
him  
Of Geoffrey's book, o' him of Malleor's,  
one  
Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time  
That hover'd between war and wanton-  
ness,  
And crownings and dethronements: take  
withal  
Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that  
Heaven  
Will blow the tempest in the distance back  
From thine and ours: for some are scared,  
who mark,  
Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,



## TO THE QUEEN

Waverings of every vane with every wind,  
And wordy trucklings to the transient  
hour,  
And fierce or careless looseners of the faith,  
And Softness breeding scorn of simple  
life,  
Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,  
Or Labour, with a groan and not a voice,  
Or Art with poisonous honey stol'n from  
France,  
And that which knows, but careful for  
itself,  
And that which knows not, ruling that  
which knows

To its own harm: the goal of this great  
world  
Lies beyond sight: yet—if our slowly-  
grown  
And crown'd Republic's crowning com-  
mon-sense,  
That saved her many times, not fail—their  
fears  
Are morning shadows huger than the  
shapes  
That cast them, not those gloomier which  
forego  
The darkness of that battle in the West,  
Where all of high and holy dies away.

## THE LOVER'S TALE

THE original Preface to 'The Lover's Tale' states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends however who, boylike, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light—accompanied with a reprint of the sequel—a work of my mature life—'The Golden Supper'?

May 1879.

### ARGUMENT

JULIAN, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavours to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II and III) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

### I

HERE far away, seen from the topmost cliff,  
Filling with purple gloom the vacancies  
Between the tufted hills, the sloping seas  
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way down  
rare sails,  
White as white clouds, floated from sky to  
sky.  
Oh! pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,  
Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,  
Where the chafed breakers of the outer sea  
Sank powerless, as anger falls aside  
And withers on the breast of peaceful love;  
Thou didst receive the growth of pines  
that fledged  
The hills that watch'd thee, as Love  
watcheth Love,  
In thine own essence, and delight thyself

To make it wholly thine on sunny days.  
Keep thou thy name of 'Lover's Bay.' See,  
sirs,  
Even now the Goddess of the Past, that  
takes  
The heart, and sometimes touches but one  
string  
That quivers, and is silent, and sometimes  
Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd  
chords  
To some old melody, begins to play  
That air which pleased her first. I feel thy  
breath;  
I come, great Mistress of the ear and eye:  
Thy breath is of the pinewood; and tho'  
years  
Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy strait  
Betwixt the native land of Love and me,

## THE LOVER'S TALE

Breathe but a little on me, and the sail  
Will draw me to the rising of the sun,  
The lucid chambers of the morning star,  
And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,  
To pass my hand across my brows, and  
muse  
On those dear hills, that never more will  
meet  
The sight that throbs and aches beneath  
my touch,  
As tho' there beat a heart in either eye;  
For when the outer lights are darken'd  
thus,  
The memory's vision hath a keener edge.  
It grows upon me now—the semicircle  
Of dark-blue waters and the narrow fringe  
Of curving beach—its wreaths of dripping  
green—  
Its pale pink shells—the summerhouse  
aloft  
That open'd on the pines with doors of  
glass,  
A mountain nest—the pleasure-boat that  
rock'd,  
Light-green with its own shadow, keel to  
keel,  
Upon the dappled dimplings of the wave,  
That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope!  
They come, they crowd upon me all at  
once—  
Moved from the cloud of unforgotten  
things,  
That sometimes on the horizon of the mind  
Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in  
storm—  
Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me—  
days  
Of dewy dawning and the amber eves  
When thou and I, Camilla, thou and I  
Were borne about the bay or safely moor'd  
Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where the  
tide  
Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all  
without  
The slowly-ridging rollers on the cliffs  
Clash'd, calling to each other, and thro'  
the arch

Down those loud waters, like a setting star,  
Mixt with the gorgeous west the light-  
house shone,  
And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell  
Would often loiter in her balmy blue,  
To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love  
Waver'd at anchor with me, when day  
hung  
From his mid-dome in Heaven's airy halls;  
Gleams of the water-circles as they broke,  
Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about her  
lips,  
Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,  
Leapt like a passing thought across her  
eyes;  
And mine with one that will not pass, till  
earth  
And heaven pass too, dwelt on my heaven,  
a face  
Most starry-fair, but kindled from within  
As 'twere with dawn. She was dark-hair'd,  
dark-eyed:  
Oh, such dark eyes! a single glance of them  
Will govern a whole life from birth to death,  
Careless of all things else, led on with light  
In trances and in visions: look at them,  
You lose yourself in utter ignorance;  
You cannot find their depth; for they go  
back,  
And farther back, and still withdraw them-  
selves  
Quite into the deep soul, that evermore  
Fresh springing from her fountains in the  
brain,  
Still pouring thro', floods with redundant  
life  
Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago  
I should have died, if it were possible  
To die in gazing on that perfectness  
Which I do bear within me: I had died,  
But from my farthest lapse, my latest ebb,  
Thine image, like a charm of light and  
strength  
Upon the waters, push'd me back again  
On these deserted sands of barren life.  
Tho' from the deep vault where the heart  
of Hope

## THE LOVER'S TALE

Fell into dust, and crumbled in the dark—  
 Forgetting how to render beautiful  
 Her countenance with quick and healthful  
 blood—

Thou didst not sway me upward; could I  
 perish

While thou, a meteor of the sepulchre,  
 Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's quiet  
 urn

For ever? He, that saith it, hath o'erstept  
 The slippery footing of his narrow wit,  
 And fall'n away from judgment. Thou art  
 light,

To which my spirit leaneth all her flowers,  
 And length of days, and immortality  
 Of thought, and freshness ever self-  
 renew'd.

For Time and Grief abode too long with  
 Life,

And, like all other friends i' the world, at  
 last

They grew weary of her fellowship:  
 So Time and Grief did beckon unto  
 Death,

And Death drew nigh and beat the doors  
 of Life;

But thou didst sit alone in the inner house,  
 A wakeful portress, and didst parle with  
 Death,—

'This is a charmed dwelling which I hold;'  
 So Death gave back, and would no further  
 come.

Yet is my life nor in the present time,  
 Nor in the present place. To me alone,  
 Push'd from his chair of regal heritage,  
 The Present is the vassal of the Past:  
 So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,  
 And cannot die, and am, in having been—  
 A portion of the pleasant yesterday,  
 Thrust forward on to-day and out of place;  
 A body journeying onward, sick with toil,  
 The weight as if of age upon my limbs,  
 The grasp of hopeless grief about my heart,  
 And all the senses weaken'd, save in that,  
 Which long ago they had glean'd and  
 garner'd up

Into the granaries of memory—  
 The clear brow, bulwark of the precious  
 brain,

Chink'd as you see, and seam'd—and all  
 the while

The light soul twines and mingles with the  
 growths

Of vigorous early days, attracted, won,  
 Married, made one with, molten into all  
 The beautiful in Past of act or place,  
 And like the all-enduring camel, driven  
 Far from the diamond fountain by the  
 palms,

Who toils across the middle moonlit nights,  
 Or when the white heats of the blinding  
 noons

Beat from the concave sand; yet in him  
 keeps

A draught of that sweet fountain that he  
 loves,

To stay his feet from falling, and his spirit  
 From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,

When I began to love. How should I tell  
 you?

Or from the after-fulness of my heart,  
 Flow back again unto my slender spring  
 And first of love, tho' every turn and depth  
 Between is clearer in my life than all  
 Its present flow. Ye know not what ye ask.  
 How should the broad and open flower tell  
 What sort of bud it was, when, prest  
 together

In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken  
 folds,

It seem'd to keep its sweetness to itself,  
 Yet was not the less sweet for that it  
 seem'd?

For young Life knows not when young  
 Life was born,

But takes it all for granted: neither Love,  
 Warm in the heart, his cradle, can remember  
 Love in the womb, but resteth satisfied,  
 Looking on her that brought him to the  
 light:

Or as men know not when they fall asleep  
 Into delicious dreams, our other life,  
 So know I not when I began to love.  
 This is my sum of knowledge—that my  
 love

Grew with myself—say rather, was my  
 growth,

My inward sap, the hold I have on earth,  
 My outward circling air wherewith I  
 breathe,

## THE LOVER'S TALE

Which yet upholds my life, and evermore  
Is to me daily life and daily death:  
For how should I have lived and not have  
loved?

Can ye take off the sweetness from the  
flower,  
The colour and the sweetness from the  
rose,  
And place them by themselves; or set apart  
Their motions and their brightness from  
the stars,

And then point out the flower or the star?  
Or build a wall betwixt my life and love,  
And tell me where I am? 'Tis even thus:  
In that I live I love; because I love  
I live: whate'er is fountain to the one  
Is fountain to the other; and where'er  
Our God unknits the riddle of the one,  
There is no shade or fold of mystery  
Swathing the other.

Many, many years,  
(For they seem many and my most of life,  
And well I could have linger'd in that  
porch,  
So unproportion'd to the dwelling-place,)  
In the Maydews of childhood, opposite  
The flush and dawn of youth, we lived  
together,  
Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father died,  
And he was happy that he saw it not;  
But I and the first daisy on his grave  
From the same clay came into light at once.  
As Love and I do number equal years,  
So she, my love, is of an age with me.  
How like each other was the birth of each!  
On the same morning, almost the same  
hour,  
Under the selfsame aspect of the stars,  
(Oh falsehood of all starcraft!) we were  
born.

How like each other was the birth of each!  
The sister of my mother—she that bore  
Camilla close beneath her beating heart,  
Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,  
With its true-touch'd pulses in the flow  
And hourly visitation of the blood,  
Sent notes of preparation manifold,  
And mellow'd echoes of the outer world—

My mother's sister, mother of my love,  
Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,  
One twofold mightier than the other was,  
In giving so much beauty to the world,  
And so much wealth as God had charged  
her with—

Loathing to put it from herself for ever,  
Left her own life with it; and dying thus,  
Crown'd with her highest act the placid  
face  
And breathless body of her good deeds  
past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She was  
motherless

And I without a father. So from each  
Of those two pillars which from earth  
uphold

Our childhood, one had fallen away, and all  
The careful burthen of our tender years  
Trembled upon the other. He that gave  
Her life, to me delightfully fulfill'd  
All lovingkindnesses, all offices  
Of watchful care and trembling tenderness.  
He waked for both: he pray'd for both: he  
slept

Dreaming of both: nor was his love the less  
Because it was divided, and shot forth  
Boughs on each side, laden with whole-  
some shade,

Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,  
And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister: on one arm  
The flaxen ringlets of our infancies  
Wander'd, the while we rested: one soft lap  
Pillow'd us both: a common light of eyes  
Was on us as we lay: our baby lips,  
Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence  
The stream of life, one stream, one life, one  
blood,

One sustenance, which, still as thought  
grew large,  
Still larger moulding all the house of  
thought,  
Made all our tastes and fancies like, per-  
haps—

All—all but one; and strange to me, and  
sweet,  
Sweet thro' strange years to know that  
whatsoever

## THE LOVER'S TALE

Our general mother meant for me alone,  
Our mutual mother dealt to both of us:  
So what was earliest mine in earliest life,  
I shared with her in whom myself remains.

As was our childhood, so our infancy,  
They tell me, was a very miracle  
Of fellow-feeling and communion.  
They tell me that we would not be alone,—  
We cried when we were parted; when I  
    wept,  
Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,  
Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that we  
    loved  
The sound of one-another's voices more  
Than the gray cuckoo loves his name, and  
    learn'd  
To lip in tune together; that we slept  
In the same cradle always, face to face.  
Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing lip,  
Folding each other, breathing on each  
    other,  
Dreaming together (dreaming of each other  
They should have added), till the morning  
    light  
Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy pane  
Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we woke  
To gaze upon each other. If this be true,  
At thought of which my whole soul lan-  
    guishes  
And faints, and hath no pulse, no breath—  
    as tho'  
A man in some still garden should infuse  
Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,  
Till, drunk with its own wine, and overfull  
Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,  
It fall on its own thorns—if this be true—  
And that way my wish leads me evermore  
Still to believe it—'tis so sweet a thought,  
Why in the utter stillness of the soul  
Doth question'd memory answer not, nor  
    tell  
Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,  
Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest har-  
    mony?

O blossom'd portal of the lonely house,  
Green prelude, April promise, glad new-  
    year  
Of Being, which with earliest violets  
And lavish carol of clear-throated larks

Fill'd all the March of life!—I will not  
    speak of thee,  
These have not seen thee, these can never  
    know thee,  
They cannot understand me. Pass we then  
A term of eighteen years. Ye would but  
    laugh,  
If I should tell you how I hoard in thought  
The faded rhymes and scraps of ancient  
    cronos,  
Gray relics of the nurseries of the world,  
Which are as gems set in my memory,  
Because she learnt them with me; or what  
    use  
To know her father left us just before  
The daffodil was blown? or how we found  
The dead man cast upon the shore? All this  
Seems to the quiet daylight of your minds  
But cloud and smoke, and in the dark of  
    mine  
Is traced with flame. Move with me to the  
    event.

There came a glorious morning, such a  
    one  
As dawns but once a season. Mercury  
On such a morning would have flung him-  
    self  
From cloud to cloud, and swum with  
    balanced wings  
To some tall mountain: when I said to her,  
'A day for Gods to stoop,' she answered,  
    'Ay,  
And men to soar:' for as that other gazed,  
Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,  
'The prophet and the chariot and the steeds,  
Suck'd into oneness like a little star  
Were drunk into the inmost blue, we stood,  
When first we came from out the pines at  
    noon,  
With hands for eaves, uplooking and almost  
Waiting to see some blessed shape in  
    heaven,  
So bathed we were in brilliance. Never yet  
Before or after have I known the spring  
Pour with such sudden deluges of light  
Into the middle summer; for that day  
Love, rising, shook his wings, and charged the  
    winds  
With spiced May-sweets from bound to  
    bound, and blew

## THE LOVER'S TALE

Fresh fire into the sun, and from within  
 Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent his  
 soul  
 Into the songs of birds, and touch'd far-off  
 His mountain-altars, his high hills, with  
 flame  
 Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound

The great pine shook with lonely sounds  
 of joy  
 That came on the sea-wind. As mountain  
 streams  
 Our bloods ran free: the sunshine seem'd  
 to brood  
 More warmly on the heart than on the  
 brow.  
 We often paused, and, looking back, we  
 saw  
 The clefts and openings in the mountains  
 fill'd  
 With the blue valley and the glistening  
 brooks,  
 And all the low dark groves, a land of love!  
 A land of promise, a land of memory,  
 A land of promise flowing with the milk  
 And honey of delicious memories!  
 And down to sea, and far as eye could ken,  
 Each way from verge to verge a Holy Land,  
 Still growing holier as you near'd the bay,  
 For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd

The grassy platform on some hill, I stoop'd,  
 I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her  
 brows  
 And mine made garlands of the selfsame  
 flower,  
 Which she took smiling, and with my work  
 thus  
 Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or twice  
 she told me  
 (For I remember all things) to let grow  
 The flowers that run poison in their veins,  
 She said, 'The evil flourish in the world.'  
 Then playfully she gave herself the lie—  
 'Nothing in nature is unbeautiful;  
 So, brother, pluck and spare not.' So I  
 wove  
 Ev'n the dull-blooded poppy-stem, 'whose  
 flower,

Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sunrise,  
 Like to the wild youth of an evil prince,  
 Is without sweetness, but who crowns him-  
 self

Above the naked poisons of his heart  
 In his old age.' A graceful thought of hers  
 Grav'n on my fancy! And oh, how like a  
 nymph,

A stately mountain nymph she look'd! how  
 native

Unto the hills she trod on! While I gazed  
 My coronal slowly disentwined itself  
 And fell between us both; tho' while I gazed  
 My spirit leap'd as with those thrills of  
 bliss

That strike across the soul in prayer, and  
 show us

That we are surely heard. Methought a  
 light

Burst from the garland I had wov'n, and  
 stood

A solid glory on her bright black hair;  
 A light methought broke from her dark,  
 dark eyes,

And shot itself into the singing winds;  
 A mystic light flash'd ev'n from her white  
 robe

As from a glass in the sun, and fell about  
 My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came

To what our people call 'The Hill of Woe.'  
 A bridge is there, that, look'd at from  
 beneath

Seems but a cobweb filament to link  
 The yawning of an earthquake-cloven  
 chasm.

And thence one night, when all the winds  
 were loud,

A woful man (for so the story went)  
 Had thrust his wife and child and dash'd  
 himself

Into the dizzy depth below. Below,  
 Fierce in the strength of far descent, a  
 stream

Flies with a shatter'd foam along the  
 chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely strown  
 with crags:

We mounted slowly; yet to both there came

## THE LOVER'S TALE

The joy of life in steepness overcome,  
And victories of ascent, and looking down  
On all that had look'd down on us; and joy  
In breathing nearer heaven; and joy to me,  
High over all the azure-circled earth,  
To breathe with her as if in heaven itself;  
And more than joy that I to her became  
Her guardian and her angel, raising her  
Still higher, past all peril, until she saw  
Beneath her feet the region far away,  
Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky

brows,  
Arise in open prospect—heath and hill,  
And hollow lined and wooded to the lips,  
And steep-down walls of battlemented  
rock

Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into spires,  
And glory of broad waters interfused,  
Whence rose as it were breath and steam  
of gold,

And over all the great wood rioting  
And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at  
intervals

With falling brook or blossom'd bush—  
and last,

Framing the mighty landscape to the west,  
A purple range of mountain-cones, between  
Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding  
bursts

The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length

Descending from the point and standing  
both,

There on the tremulous bridge, that from  
beneath

Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in air,  
We paused amid the splendour. All the  
west

And ev'n unto the middle south was ribb'd  
And barr'd with bloom on bloom. The sun  
below,

Held for a space 'twixt cloud and wave,  
shower'd down

Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over  
That various wilderness a tissue of light  
Unparallel'd. On the other side, the moon,  
Half-melted into thin blue air, stood still,  
And pale and fibrous as a wither'd leaf,  
Nor yet endured in presence of His eyes  
To indue his lustre; most unloverlike,

Since in his absence full of light and joy,  
And giving light to others. But this most,  
Next to her presence whom I loved so well,  
Spoke loudly even into my inmost heart  
As to my outward hearing: the loud stream,  
Forth issuing from his portals in the crag  
(A visible link unto the home of my heart),  
Ran amber toward the west, and nigh the  
sea

Parting my own loved mountains was re-  
ceived,

Shorn of its strength, into the sympathy  
Of that small bay, which out to open main  
Glow'd intermingling close beneath the sun.  
Spirit of Love! that little hour was bound  
Shut in from Time, and dedicate to thee:  
Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it, and  
the earth

They fell on became hallow'd evermore.

We turn'd: our eyes met: hers were  
bright, and mine

Were dim with floating tears, that shot the  
sunset

In lightnings round me; and my name was  
borne

Upon her breath. Henceforth my name  
has been

A hallow'd memory like the names of old,  
A center'd, glory-circled memory,

And a peculiar treasure, brooking not  
Exchange or currency: and in that hour  
A hope flow'd round me, like a golden mist  
Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs,  
A moment, ere the onward whirlwind  
shatter it,

Waver'd and floated—which was less than  
Hope,

Because it lack'd the power of perfect  
Hope;

But which was more and higher than all  
Hope,

Because all other Hope had lower aim;  
Even that this name to which her gracious  
lips

Did lend such gentle utterance, this one  
name,

In some obscure hereafter, might in-  
wreathe

(How lovelier, nobler then!) her life, her  
love,

## THE LOVER'S TALE

With my life, love, soul, spirit, and heart  
and strength.

'Brother,' she said, 'let this be call'd  
henceforth  
The Hill of Hope;' and I replied, 'O sister,  
My will is one with thine; the Hill of  
Hope.'  
Nevertheless, we did not change the name

I did not speak: I could not speak my  
love.  
Love lieth deep: Love dwells not in lip-  
depths.  
Love wraps his wings on either side the  
heart,  
Constraining it with kisses close and warm,  
Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts  
So that they pass not to the shrine of sound.  
Else had the life of that delighted hour  
Drunk in the largeness of the utterance  
Of Love; but how should Earthly measure  
mete  
The Heavenly-unmeasured or unlimited  
Love,  
Who scarce can tune his high majestic  
sense  
Unto the thundersong that wheels the  
spheres,  
Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,  
And flowing odour of the spacious air,  
Scarce housed within the circle of this  
Earth,  
Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,  
Which pass with that which breathes  
them? Sooner Earth  
Might go round Heaven, and the strait  
girth of Time  
Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,  
Than language grasp the infinite of Love.

O day which did enwomb that happy  
hour,  
Thou art blessed in the years, divinest day!  
O Genius of that hour which dost uphold  
Thy coronal of glory like a God,  
Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,  
Who walk before thee, ever turning round  
To gaze upon thee till their eyes are dim  
With dwelling on the light and depth of  
thine,

Thy name is ever worshipp'd among hours!  
Had I died then, I had not seem'd to die,  
For bliss stood round me like the light of  
Heaven,—

Had I died then, I had not known the  
death;

Yea had the Power from whose right hand  
the light

Of Life issueth, and from whose left hand  
floweth

The Shadow of Death, perennial effluences,  
Whereof to all that draw the wholesome  
air,

Somewhile the one must overflow the  
other;

Then had he stemm'd my day with night,  
and driven

My current to the fountain whence it  
sprang,—

Even his own abiding excellence—

On me, methinks, that shock of gloom had  
fall'n

Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged  
The other, like the sun I gazed upon,  
Which seeming for the moment due to  
death,

And dipping his head low beneath the  
verge,

Yet bearing round about him his own day,  
In confidence of unabated strength,

Steppeth from Heaven to Heaven, from  
light to light,

And holdeth his undimmed forehead far  
Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the downward  
hill;

We past from light to dark. On the other  
side

Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain hall,  
Which none have fathom'd. If you go  
far in

(The country people rumour) you may  
hear

The moaning of the woman and the child,  
Shut in the secret chambers of the rock.

I too have heard a sound—perchance of  
streams

Running far on within its inmost halls,  
The home of darkness; but the cavern-  
mouth,



## THE LOVER'S TALE

Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,  
Gives birth to a brawling brook, that passing lightly

Adown a natural stair of tangled roots,  
Is presently received in a sweet grave  
Of eglantines, a place of burial  
Far lovelier than its cradle; for unseen,  
But taken with the sweetness of the place,  
It makes a constant bubbling melody  
That drowns the nearer echoes. Lower down

Spreads out a little lake, that, flooding,  
leaves

Low banks of yellow sand; and from the woods

That belt it rise three dark, tall cypresses,—  
Three cypresses, symbols of mortal woe,  
That men plant over graves.

Hither we came,

And sitting down upon the golden moss,  
Held converse sweet and low—low converse sweet,  
In which our voices bore least part. The wind

Told a lovetale beside us, how he woo'd  
The waters, and the waters answering lisp'd

To kisses of the wind, that, sick with love,  
Fainted at intervals, and grew again  
To utterance of passion. Ye cannot shape

Fancy so fair as is this memory.  
Methought all excellence that ever was  
Had drawn herself from many thousand years,

And all the separate Edens of this earth,  
To centre in this place and time. I listen'd,  
And her words stole with most prevailing

sweetness  
Into my heart, as thronging fancies come  
To boys and girls when summer days are new,

And soul and heart and body are all at ease:  
What marvel my Camilla told me all?  
It was so happy an hour, so sweet a place,

And I was as the brother of her blood,  
And by that name I moved upon her breath;  
Dear name, which had too much of nearness in it

And heralded the distance of this time!

At first her voice was very sweet and low,  
As if she were afraid of utterance;

But in the onward current of her speech,  
(As echoes of the hollow-banked brooks  
Are fashion'd by the channel which they keep),

Her words did of their meaning borrow sound,

Her cheek did catch the colour of her words.

I heard and trembled, yet I could but hear;  
My heart paused—my raised eyelids would not fall,

But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.  
I seem'd the only part of Time stood still,

And saw the motion of all other things;  
While her words, syllable by syllable,

Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear  
Fell; and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not to

speak;  
But she spake on, for I did name no wish.

What marvel my Camilla told me all  
Her maiden dignities of Hope and Love—

'Perchance,' she said, 'return'd.' Even then the stars

Did tremble in their stations as I gazed;  
But she spake on, for I did name no wish,

No wish—no hope. Hope was not wholly dead,

But breathing hard at the approach of Death,—

Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine  
No longer in the dearest sense of mine—

For all the secret of her inmost heart,  
And all the maiden empire of her mind,

Lay like a map before me, and I saw  
There, where I hoped myself to reign as

king,  
There, where that day I crown'd myself as

king,  
There in my realm and even on my throne,

*Another!* then it seem'd as tho' a link  
Of some tight chain within my inmost

frame  
Was riven in twain: that life I heeded not

Flow'd from me, and the darkness of the grave,

The darkness of the grave and utter night,  
Did swallow up my vision; at her feet,

Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,  
Smit with exceeding sorrow unto Death.

## THE LOVER'S TALE

Then had the earth beneath me yawning  
 cloven  
 With such a sound as when an iceberg splits  
 From cope to base—had Heaven from all  
 her doors,  
 With all her golden thresholds clashing,  
 roll'd  
 Her heaviest thunder—I had lain as dead,  
 Mute, blind and motionless as then I lay  
 Dead, for henceforth there was no life  
 for me!  
 Mute, for henceforth what use were words  
 to me!  
 Blind, for the day was as the night to me!  
 The night to me was kinder than the day;  
 The night in pity took away my day,  
 Because my grief as yet was newly born  
 Of eyes too weak to look upon the light;  
 And thro' the hasty notice of the ear  
 Frail Life was startled from the tender love  
 Of him she brooded over. Would I had lain  
 Until the plaited ivy-trees had wound  
 Round my worn limbs, and the wild brier  
 had driven  
 Its knotted thorns thro' my unpaining  
 brows,  
 Leaning its roses on my faded eyes.  
 The wind had blown above me, and the  
 rain  
 Had fall'n upon me, and the gilded snake  
 Had nestled in this bosom-throne of Love,  
 But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me. All  
 too soon  
 Life (like a wanton too-officious friend,  
 Who will not *hear* denial, vain and rude  
 With proffer of unwish'd-for services)  
 Entering all the avenues of sense  
 Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,  
 With hated warmth of apprehensiveness.  
 And first the chillness of the sprinkled  
 brook  
 Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd to  
 hear  
 Its murmur, as the drowning seaman hears,  
 Who with his head below the surface dropt  
 Listens the muffled booming indistinct  
 Of the confused floods, and dimly knows  
 His head shall rise no more: and then  
 came in

The white light of the weary moon above,  
 Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.  
 Was my sight drunk that it did shape to me  
 Him who should own that name? Were it  
 not well  
 If so be that the echo of that name  
 Ringing within the fancy had updrawn  
 A fashion and a phantasm of the form  
 It should attach to? Phantom!—had the  
 ghastliest  
 That ever lusted for a body, sucking  
 The foul steam of the grave to thicken by it,  
 There in the shuddering moonlight brought  
 its face  
 And what it has for eyes as close to mine  
 As he did—better that than his, than he  
 The friend, the neighbour, Lionel, the  
 beloved,  
 The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,  
 The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,  
 All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.  
 O how her choice did leap forth from his  
 eyes!  
 O how her love did clothe itself in smiles  
 About his lips! and—not one moment's  
 grace—  
 Then when the effect weigh'd seas upon  
 my head  
 To come my way! to twit me with the  
 cause!

Was not the land as free thro' all her  
 ways  
 To him as me? Was not his wont to walk  
 Between the going light and growing  
 night?  
 Had I not learnt my loss before he came?  
 Could that be more because he came my  
 way?  
 Why should he not come my way if he  
 would?  
 And yet to-night, to-night—when all my  
 wealth  
 Flash'd from me in a moment and I fell  
 Beggar'd for ever—why *should* he come  
 my way  
 Robed in those robes of light I must not  
 wear,  
 With that great crown of beams about his  
 brows—  
 Come like an angel to a damned soul,

## THE LOVER'S TALE

To tell him of the bliss he had with God—  
Come like a careless and a greedy heir  
That scarce can wait the reading of the will  
Before he takes possession? Was mine a  
mood

To be invaded rudely, and not rather  
A sacred, secret, unapproached woe,  
Unspeaking? I was shut up with Grief;  
She took the body of my past delight,  
Narded and swathed and balm'd it for  
herself,

And laid it in a sepulchre of rock  
Never to rise again. I was led mute  
Into her temple like a sacrifice;  
I was the High Priest in her holiest place,  
Not to be loudly broken in upon.

Oh friend, thoughts deep and heavy as  
these well-nigh  
O'erbore the limits of my brain: but he  
Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm up-  
stay'd.

I thought it was an adder's fold, and once  
I strove to disengage myself, but fail'd,  
Being so feeble: she bent above me, too;  
Wan was her cheek; for whatsoe'er of blight  
Lives in the dewy touch of pity had made  
The red rose there a pale one—and her  
eyes—

I saw the moonlight glitter on their tears—  
And some few drops of that distressful rain  
Fell on my face, and her long ringlets  
moved,

Drooping and beaten by the breeze, and  
brush'd

My fallen forehead in their to and fro,  
For in the sudden anguish of her heart  
Loosed from their simple thrall they had  
flow'd abroad,

And floated on and parted round her neck,  
Mantling her form halfway. She, when I  
woke,

Something she ask'd, I know not what, and  
ask'd,

Unanswer'd, since I spake not; for the  
sound

Of that dear voice so musically low,  
And now first heard with any sense of pain,  
As it had taken life away before,  
Choked all the syllables, that strove to rise  
From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,  
From his great hoard of happiness distill'd  
Some drops of solace; like a vain rich man,  
That, having always prosper'd in the  
world,

Folding his hands, deals comfortable words  
To hearts wounded for ever; yet, in truth,  
Fair speech was his and delicate of phrase,  
Falling in whispers on the sense, address'd  
More to the inward than the outward ear,  
As rain of the midsummer midnight soft,  
Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and the  
green

Of the dead spring: but mine was wholly  
dead,

No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for me.  
Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd  
wrong?

And why was I to darken their pure love,  
If, as I found, they two did love each other,  
Because my own was darken'd? Why was I  
To cross between their happy star and  
them?

To stand a shadow by their shining doors,  
And vex them with my darkness? Did I  
love her?

Ye know that I did love her; to this present  
My full-orb'd love has waned not. Did I  
love her,

And could I look upon her tearful eyes?  
What had *she* done to weep? Why should  
*she* weep?

O innocent of spirit—let my heart  
Break rather—whom the gentlest airs of  
Heaven

Should kiss with an unwonted gentleness.  
Her love did murder mine? What then?  
She deem'd

I wore a brother's mind: she call'd me  
brother:

She told me all her love: she shall not weep.

The brightness of a burning thought,  
awhile

In battle with the glooms of my dark will,  
Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up  
There on the depth of an unfathom'd woe  
Reflex of action. Starting up at once,  
As from a dismal dream of my own death,  
I, for I loved her, lost my love in Love;  
I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she lov'd,

## THE LOVER'S TALE

And laid it in her own, and sent my cry  
Thro' the blank night to Him who loving  
made

The happy and the unhappy love, that He  
Would hold the hand of blessing over  
them,

Lionel, the happy, and her, and her, his  
bride!

Let them so love that men and boys may  
say,

'O! how they love each other!' till their  
love

Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all  
Known, when their faces are forgot in the  
land—

One golden dream of love, from which may  
death

Awake them with heaven's music in a life  
More living to some happier happiness,  
Swallowing its precedent in victory.

And as for me, Camilla, as for me,—  
The dew of tears is an unwholesome dew,  
They will but sicken the sick plant the  
more.

Deem that I love thee but as brothers do,  
So shalt thou love me still as sisters do;  
Or if thou dream aught farther, dream but  
how

I could have loved thee, had there been  
none else

To love as lovers, loved again by thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I spake,  
When I beheld her weep so ruefully;  
For sure my love should ne'er indue the  
front

And mask of Hate, who lives on others'  
moans.

Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter  
draughts,

And batten on her poisons? Love forbid!  
Love passeth not the threshold of cold  
Hate,

And Hate is strange beneath the roof of  
Love.

O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up these  
tears

Shed for the love of Love; for tho' mine  
image,

The subject of thy power, be cold in her,  
Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the source

Of these sad tears, and feeds their down-  
ward flow.

So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to  
death,

Received unto himself a part of blame,  
Being guiltless, as an innocent prisoner,  
Who, when the woful sentence hath been  
past,

And all the clearness of his fame hath gone  
Beneath the shadow of the curse of man,  
First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom  
awaked,

And looking round upon his tearful friends,  
Forthwith and in his agony conceives  
A shameful sense as of a cleaving crime—  
For whence without some guilt should  
such grief be?

So died that hour, and fell into the  
abysm

Of forms outworn, but not to me outworn,  
Who never hail'd another—was there one?  
There might be one—one other, worth the  
life

That made it sensible. So that hour died  
Like odour rapt into the winged wind  
Borne into alien lands and far away.

There be some hearts so airily built, that  
they,

They—when their love is wreck'd—if  
Love can wreck—

On that sharp ridge of utmost doom ride  
highly

Above the perilous seas of Change and  
Chance;

Nay, more, hold out the lights of cheerful-  
ness;

As the tall ship, that many a dreary year  
Knit to some dismal sandbank far at sea,  
All thro' the livelong hours of utter dark,  
Showers slanting light upon the dolorous  
wave.

For me—what light, what gleam on those  
black ways

Where Love could walk with banish'd  
Hope no more?

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters fair;  
Love's arms were wreath'd about the neck  
of Hope,

## THE LOVER'S TALE

And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love drew in  
her breath  
In that close kiss, and drank her whisper'd  
tales.  
They said that Love would die when Hope  
was gone,  
And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd  
after Hope;  
At last she sought out Memory, and they  
trod  
The same old paths where Love had walk'd  
with Hope,  
And Memory fed the soul of Love with  
tears.

### II

FROM that time forth I would not see her  
more;  
But many weary moons I lived alone—  
Alone, and in the heart of the great forest.  
Sometimes upon the hills beside the sea  
All day I watch'd the floating isles of shade,  
And sometimes on the shore, upon the  
sands  
Insensibly I drew her name, until  
The meaning of the letters shot into  
My brain; anon the wanton billow wash'd  
Them over, till they faded like my love.  
The hollow caverns heard me—the black  
brooks  
Of the midforest heard me—the soft winds,  
Laden with thistledown and seeds of  
flowers,  
Paused in their course to hear me, for my  
voice  
Was all of thee: the merry linnet knew me,  
The squirrel knew me, and the dragonfly  
Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.  
The rough brier tore my bleeding palms;  
the hemlock,  
Brow-high, did strike my forehead as I  
past;  
Yet trod I not the wildflower in my path,  
Nor bruised the wildbird's egg.

Was this the end?

Why grew we then together in one plot?  
Why fed we from one fountain? drew one  
sun?  
Why were our mothers' branches of one  
stem?

Why were we one in all things, save in that  
Where to have been one had been the cope  
and crown  
Of all I hoped and fear'd?—if that same  
nearness  
Were father to this distance, and that *one*  
Vauntcourier to this *double*? if Affection  
Living slew Love, and Sympathy hew'd  
out  
The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the hill  
Where last we roam'd together, for the  
sound  
Of the loud stream was pleasant, and the  
wind  
Came wooingly with woodbine smells.  
Sometimes  
All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,  
Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-  
cones  
That spired above the wood; and with mad  
hand  
Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-screen,  
I cast them in the noisy brook beneath,  
And watch'd them till they vanish'd from  
my sight  
Beneath the bower of wreathed eglantines:  
And all the fragments of the living rock  
(Huge blocks, which some old trembling of  
the world  
Had loosen'd from the mountain, till they  
fell  
Half-digging their own graves) these in my  
agony  
Did I make bare of all the golden moss,  
Wherewith the dashing runnel in the spring  
Had liveried them all over. In my brain  
The spirit seem'd to flay from thought to  
thought,  
As moonlight wandering thro' a mist: my  
blood  
Crept like marsh drains thro' all my lan-  
guid limbs;  
The motions of my heart seem'd far  
within me,  
Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its pulses;  
And yet it shook me, that my frame would  
shudder,  
As if 'twere drawn asunder by the rack.  
But over the deep graves of Hope and Fear,

## THE LOVER'S TALE

And all the broken palaces of the Past,  
 Brooded one master-passion evermore,  
 Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky  
 Above some fair metropolis, earth-  
 shock'd,—  
 Hung round with ragged rims and burning  
 folds,—  
 Embathing all with wild and woful hues,  
 Great hills of ruins, and collapsed masses  
 Of thundershaken columns indistinct,  
 And fused together in the tyrannous light—  
 Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me!

Sometimes I thought Camilla was no  
 more,  
 Some one had told me she was dead, and  
 ask'd  
 If I would see her burial: then I seem'd  
 To rise, and through the forest-shadow  
 borne  
 With more than mortal swiftness, I ran  
 down  
 The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon  
 The rear of a procession, curving round  
 The silver-sheeted bay: in front of which  
 Six stately virgins, all in white, upbare  
 A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest  
 lawn,  
 Wreathed round the bier with garlands: in  
 the distance,  
 From out the yellow woods upon the hill  
 Look'd forth the summit and the pinnacles  
 Of a gray steeple—thence at intervals  
 A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,  
 Save those six virgins which upheld the  
 bier,  
 Were stole from head to foot in flowing  
 black;  
 One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd his  
 brow,  
 And he was loud in weeping and in praise  
 Of her, we follow'd: a strong sympathy  
 Shook all my soul: I flung myself upon  
 him  
 In tears and cries: I told him all my love,  
 How I had loved her from the first; whereat  
 He shrank and howl'd, and from his brow  
 drew back  
 His hand to push me from him; and the  
 face,  
 The very face and form of Lionel

Flash'd thro' my eyes into my innermost  
 brain,  
 And at his feet I seem'd to faint and fall,  
 To fall and die away. I could not rise  
 Albeit I strove to follow. They past on,  
 The lordly Phantasms! in their floating  
 folds  
 They past and were no more: but I had  
 fallen  
 Prone by the dashing runnel on the grass.

Always the inaudible invisible thought,  
 Artificer and subject, lord and slave,  
 Shaped by the audible and visible,  
 Moulded the audible and visible;  
 All crisped sounds of wave and leaf and  
 wind,  
 Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brain;  
 The cloud-pavilion'd element, the wood,  
 The mountain, the three cypresses, the cave,  
 Storm, sunset, glows and glories of the  
 moon  
 Below black firs, when silent-creeping  
 winds  
 Laid the long night in silver streaks and  
 bars,  
 Were wrought into the tissue of my dream:  
 The moanings in the forest, the loud brook,  
 Cries of the partridge like a rusty key  
 Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dorhawk-  
 whirr  
 Awoke me not, but were a part of sleep,  
 And voices in the distance calling to me  
 And in my vision bidding me dream on,  
 Like sounds without the twilight realm of  
 dreams,  
 Which wander round the bases of the hills,  
 And murmur at the low-dropt eaves of  
 sleep,  
 Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes  
 The vision had fair prelude, in the end  
 Opening on darkness, stately vestibules  
 To caves and shows of Death: whether the  
 mind,  
 With some revenge—even to itself un-  
 known,—  
 Made strange division of its suffering  
 With her, whom to have suffering view'  
 had been  
 Extremest pain; or that the clear-eye  
 Spirit,

## THE LOVER'S TALE

Being blunted in the Present, grew at length  
 Prophetic and prescient of whate'er  
 The Future had in store: or that which  
 most  
 Enchains belief, the sorrow of my spirit  
 Was of so wide a compass it took in  
 All I had loved, and my dull agony,  
 Ideally to her transferr'd, became  
 Anguish intolerable.

The day waned;

Alone I sat with her: about my brow  
 Her warm breath floated in the utterance  
 Of silver-chorded tones: her lips were  
 sunder'd  
 With smiles of tranquil bliss, which broke  
 in light  
 Like morning from her eyes—her eloquent  
 eyes,  
 (As I have seen them many a hundred  
 times)  
 Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro' mine  
 down rain'd  
 Their spirit-searching splendours. As a  
 vision  
 Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd  
 In damp and dismal dungeons under-  
 ground,  
 Confined on points of faith, when strength  
 is shock'd  
 With torment, and expectancy of worse  
 Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged walls,  
 All unawares before his half-shut eyes,  
 Comes in upon him in the dead of night,  
 And with the excess of sweetness and of  
 awe,  
 Makes the heart tremble, and the sight run  
 over  
 Upon his steely gyves; so those fair eyes  
 Shone on my darkness, forms which ever  
 stood  
 Within the magic cirque of memory,  
 Invisible but deathless, waiting still  
 The edict of the will to reassume  
 The semblance of those rare realities  
 Of which they were the mirrors. Now the  
 light  
 Which was their life, burst through the  
 cloud of thought  
 Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room

Within the summer-house of which I  
 spake,  
 Hung round with paintings of the sea, and  
 one  
 A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved prow  
 Clambering, the mast bent and the ravin  
 wind  
 In her sail roaring. From the outer day,  
 Betwixt the close-set ivies came a broad  
 And solid beam of isolated light,  
 Crowded with driving atomies, and fell  
 Slanting upon that picture, from prime  
 youth  
 Well-known well-loved. She drew it long  
 ago  
 Forthgazing on the waste and open sea,  
 One morning when the upblown billow  
 ran  
 Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I had  
 pour'd  
 Into the shadowing pencil's naked forms  
 Colour and life: it was a bond and seal  
 Of friendship, spoken of with tearful  
 smiles;  
 A monument of childhood and of love;  
 The poesy of childhood; my lost love  
 Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it  
 together  
 In mute and glad remembrance, and each  
 heart  
 Grew closer to the other, and the eye  
 Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing like  
 The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-  
 couch'd—  
 A beauty which is death; when all at  
 once  
 That painted vessel, as with inner life,  
 Began to heave upon that painted sea;  
 An earthquake, my loud heart-beats, made  
 the ground  
 Reel under us, and all at once, soul, life  
 And breath and motion, past and flow'd  
 away  
 To those unreal billows: round and round  
 A whirlwind caught and bore us; mighty  
 gyres  
 Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind-  
 driven  
 Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she  
 shriek'd;

## THE LOVER'S TALE

My heart was cloven with pain; I wound  
 my arms  
 About her: we whirl'd giddily; the wind  
 Sung; but I clasp'd her without fear: her  
 weight  
 Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim eyes,  
 And parted lips which drank her breath,  
 down-hung  
 The jaws of Death: I, groaning, from me  
 flung  
 Her empty phantom: all the sway and  
 whirl  
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm, and I  
 Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and  
 ever.

### III

I CAME one day and sat among the stones  
 Strewn in the entry of the moaning cave;  
 A morning air, sweet after rain, ran over  
 The rippling levels of the lake, and blew  
 Coolness and moisture and all smells of bud  
 And foliage from the dark and dripping  
 woods  
 Upon my fever'd brows that shook and  
 throbb'd  
 From temple unto temple. To what height  
 The day had grown I know not. Then  
 came on me  
 The hollow tolling of the bell, and all  
 The vision of the bier. As heretofore  
 I walk'd behind with one who veil'd his  
 brow.  
 Methought by slow degrees the sullen bell  
 Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on the  
 shore  
 Sloped into louder surf: those that went  
 with me,  
 And those that held the bier before my  
 face,  
 Moved with one spirit round about the bay,  
 Trod swifter steps; and while I walk'd  
 with these  
 In marvel at that gradual change, I thought  
 Four bells instead of one began to ring,  
 Four merry bells, four merry marriage-  
 bells,  
 In clanging cadence jangling peal on peal—  
 A long loud clash of rapid marriage-bells.  
 Then those who led the van, and those in  
 rear,  
 Rush'd into dance, and like wild Bacchanals

Fled onward to the steeple in the woods:  
 I, too, was borne along and felt the blast  
 Beat on my heated eyelids: all at once  
 The front rank made a sudden halt; the  
 bells  
 Lapsed into frightful stillness; the surge  
 fell  
 From thunder into whispers; those six  
 maids  
 With shrieks and ringing laughter on the  
 sand  
 Threw down the bier; the woods upon the  
 hill  
 Waved with a sudden gust that sweeping  
 down  
 Took the edges of the pall, and blew it far  
 Until it hung, a little silver cloud  
 Over the sounding seas: I turn'd: my heart  
 Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the hand,  
 Waiting to see the settled countenance  
 Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading flowers.  
 But she from out her death-like chrysalis,  
 She from her bier, as into fresher life,  
 My sister, and my cousin, and my love,  
 Leapt lightly clad in bridal white—her hair  
 Studded with one rich Provence rose—a  
 light  
 Of smiling welcome round her lips—her  
 eyes  
 And cheeks as bright as when she climb'd  
 the hill.  
 One hand she reach'd to those that came  
 behind,  
 And while I mused nor yet endured to take  
 So rich a prize, the man who stood with  
 me  
 Stept gaily forward, throwing down his  
 robes,  
 And clasp'd her hand in his: again the bells  
 Jangled and clang'd: again the stormy surf  
 Crash'd in the shingle: and the whirling  
 rout  
 Led by those two rush'd into dance, and  
 fled  
 Wind-footed to the steeple in the woods,  
 Till they were swallow'd in the leafy  
 bowers,  
 And I stood sole beside the vacant bier.  
 There, there, my latest vision—then the  
 event!



## THE LOVER'S TALE

### IV

#### THE GOLDEN SUPPER

(*Another speaks*)

HE flies the event: he leaves the event to me:  
Poor Julian—how he rush'd away; the bells,  
Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear and heart—  
But cast a parting glance at me, you saw,  
As who should say 'Continue.' Well he had  
One golden hour—of triumph shall I say?  
Solace at least—before he left his home.

Would you had seen him in that hour of his!  
He moved thro' all of it majestically—  
Restrain'd himself quite to the close—but now—

Whether they *were* his lady's marriage-bells,  
Or prophets of them in his fantasy,  
I never ask'd: but Lionel and the girl  
Were wedded, and our Julian came again  
Back to his mother's house among the pines.  
But these, their gloom, the mountains and the Bay,  
The whole land weigh'd him down as Ætna does  
The Giant of Mythology: he would go,  
Would leave the land for ever, and had gone  
Surely, but for a whisper, 'Go not yet,'  
Some warning—sent divinely—as it seem'd  
By that which follow'd—but of this I deem  
As of the visions that he told—the event  
Glanced back upon them in his after life,  
And partly made them—tho' he knew it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not look at her—  
No not for months: but, when the eleventh moon  
After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,  
Heard yet once more the tolling bell, and said,

Would you could toll me out of life, but found—

All softly as his mother broke it to him—  
A crueller reason than a crazy ear,  
For that low knell tolling his lady dead—  
Dead—and had lain three days without a pulse:  
All that look'd on her had pronounced her dead.  
And so they bore her (for in Julian's land  
They never nail a dumb head up in elm),  
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of heaven,  
And laid her in the vault of her own kin.

What did he then? not die: he is here and hale—  
Not plunge headforemost from the mountain there,  
And leave the name of Lover's Leap: not he:  
He knew the meaning of the whisper now,  
Thought that he knew it. 'This, I stay'd for this;  
O love, I have not seen you for so long.  
Now, now, will I go down into the grave,  
I will be all alone with all I love,  
And kiss her on the lips. She is his no more:  
The dead returns to me, and I go down  
To kiss the dead.'

The fancy stirr'd him so  
He rose and went, and entering the dim vault,  
And, making there a sudden light, beheld  
All round about him that which all will be.  
The light was but a flash, and went again.  
Then at the far end of the vault he saw  
His lady with the moonlight on her face;  
Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars  
Of black and bands of silver, which the moon  
Struck from an open grating overhead  
High in the wall, and all the rest of her  
Drown'd in the gloom and horror of the vault.

'It was my wish,' he said, 'to pass, to sleep,  
To rest, to be with her—till the great day

## THE LOVER'S TALE

Peal'd on us with that music which rights  
all,  
And raised us hand in hand.' And kneeling  
there

Down in the dreadful dust that once was  
man,  
Dust, as he said, that once was loving  
hearts,  
Hearts that had beat with such a love as  
mine—

Not such as mine, no, nor for such as her—  
He softly put his arm about her neck  
And kiss'd her more than once, till helpless  
death

And silence made him bold—nay, but I  
wrong him,

He revered his dear lady even in death;  
But, placing his true hand upon her heart,  
'O, you warm heart,' he moan'd, 'not even  
death

Can chill you all at once:' then starting,  
thought

His dreams had come again. 'Do I wake or  
sleep?

Or am I made immortal, or my love  
Mortal once more?' It beat—the heart—  
it beat:

Faint—but it beat: at which his own began  
To pulse with such a vehemence that it  
drown'd

The feebler motion underneath his hand.  
But when at last his doubts were satisfied,  
He raised her softly from the sepulchre,  
And, wrapping her all over with the cloak  
He came in, and now striding fast, and now  
Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore  
Holding his golden burthen in his arms,  
So bore her thro' the solitary land  
Back to the mother's house where she was  
born.

There the good mother's kindly minis-  
tering,  
With half a night's appliances, recall'd  
Her fluttering life: she rais'd an eye that  
ask'd

'Where?' till the things familiar to her  
youth

Had made a silent answer: then she spoke  
'Here! and how came I here?' and learn-  
ing it

(They told her somewhat rashly as I think)  
At once began to wander and to wail,  
'Ay, but you know that you must give me  
back:

Send! bid him come;' but Lionel was away—  
Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none knew  
where.

'He casts me out,' she wept, 'and goes'—a  
wail

That seeming something, yet was nothing,  
born

Not from believing mind, but shatter'd  
nerve,

Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof  
At some precipitance in her burial.

Then, when her own true spirit had  
return'd,

'Oh yes, and you,' she said, 'and none but  
you?

For you have given me life and love again,  
And none but you yourself shall tell him  
of it,

And you shall give me back when he  
returns.'

'Stay then a little,' answer'd Julian, 'here,  
And keep yourself, none knowing, to your-  
self;

And I will do your will. I may not stay,  
No, not an hour; but send me notice of  
him

When he returns, and then will I return,  
And I will make a solemn offering of you  
To him you love.' And faintly she replied,  
'And I will do *your* will, and none shall  
know.'

Not know? with such a secret to be  
known.

But all their house was old and loved them  
both,

And all the house had known the loves of  
both;

Had died almost to serve them any way,  
And all the land was waste and solitary:  
And then he rode away; but after this,  
An hour or two, Camilla's travail came  
Upon her, and that day a boy was born,  
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,  
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,

## THE LOVER'S TALE

There fever seized upon him: myself was then  
 Travelling that land, and meant to rest an hour;  
 And sitting down to such a base repast,  
 It makes me angry yet to speak of it—  
 I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd  
 The moulder'd stairs (for everything was vile)  
 And in a loft, with none to wait on him,  
 Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,  
 Raving of dead men's dust and beating hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,  
 A flat malarian world of reed and rush!  
 But there from fever and my care of him  
 Sprang up a friendship that may help us yet.  
 For while we roam'd along the dreary coast,  
 And waited for her message, piece by piece  
 I learnt the drearier story of his life;  
 And, tho' he loved and honour'd Lionel,  
 Found that the sudden wail his lady made  
 Dwelt in his fancy: did he know her worth,  
 Her beauty even? should he not be taught,  
 Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,  
 The value of that jewel he had to guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we past,  
 I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind, the soul:  
*That* makes the sequel pure; tho' some of us  
 Beginning at the sequel know no more.  
 Not such am I: and yet I say the bird  
 That will not hear my call, however sweet,  
 But if my neighbour whistle answers him—  
 What matter? there are others in the wood.  
 Yet when I saw her (and I thought him crazed,  
 Tho' not with such a craziness as needs  
 A cell and keeper), those dark eyes of hers—  
 Oh! such dark eyes! and not her eyes alone,  
 But all from these to where she touch'd on earth,  
 For such a craziness as Julian's look'd  
 No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came  
 To greet us, her young hero in her arms!  
 'Kiss him,' she said. 'You gave me life again.  
 He, but for you, had never seen it once.  
 His other father you! Kiss him, and then  
 Forgive him, if his name be Julian too.'

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart! his own  
 Sent such a flame into his face, I knew  
 Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him there.

But he was all the more resolved to go,  
 And sent at once to Lionel, praying him  
 By that great love they both had borne the dead,  
 To come and revel for one hour with him  
 Before he left the land for evermore;  
 And then to friends—they were not many  
 —who lived  
 Scatteringly about that lonely land of his,  
 And bad them to a banquet of farewells.

And Julian made a solemn feast: I never  
 Sat at a costlier; for all round his hall  
 From column on to column, as in a wood,  
 Not such as here—an equatorial one,  
 Great garlands swung and blossom'd; and beneath,  
 Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of Art,  
 Chalice and salver, wines that, Heaven  
 knows when,  
 Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten sun,  
 And kept it thro' a hundred years of gloom,  
 Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups  
 Where nymph and god ran ever round in gold—  
 Others of glass as costly—some with gems  
 Moveable and resettable at will,  
 And trebling all the rest in value—Ah heavens!  
 Why need I tell you all?—suffice to say  
 That whatsoever such a house as his,  
 And his was old, has in it rare or fair  
 Was brought before the guest: and they,  
 the guests,  
 Wonder'd at some strange light in Julian's eyes  
 (I told you that he had his golden hour),  
 And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd  
 To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his

## THE LOVER'S TALE

And that resolved self-exile from a land  
He never would revisit, such a feast  
So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n than  
rich,  
But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the hall  
Two great funereal curtains, looping down,  
Parted a little ere they met the floor,  
About a picture of his lady, taken  
Some years before, and falling hid the  
frame.

And just above the parting was a lamp:  
So the sweet figure folded round with night  
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with a  
smile.

Well then—our solemn feast—we ate  
and drank,  
And might—the wines being of such  
nobleness—

Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,  
And something weird and wild about it all:  
What was it? for our lover seldom spoke,  
Scarce touch'd the meats; but ever and  
anon

A priceless goblet with a priceless wine  
Arising, show'd he drank beyond his use;  
And when the feast was near an end, he  
said:

'There is a custom in the Orient,  
friends—

I read of it in Persia—when a man  
Will honour those who feast with him, he  
brings

And shows them whatsoever he accounts  
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,  
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.  
This custom——'

Pausing here a moment, all  
The guests broke in upon him with meet-  
ing hands  
And cries about the banquet—'Beautiful!  
Who could desire more beauty at a feast?'

The lover answer'd, 'There is more than  
one  
Here sitting who desires it. Laud me not  
Before my time, but hear me to the close.

This custom steps yet further when the  
guest

Is loved and honour'd to the uttermost.  
For after he hath shown him gems or gold,  
He brings and sets before him in rich guise  
That which is thrice as beautiful as these,  
The beauty that is dearest to his heart—  
"O my heart's lord, would I could show  
you," he says,

"Ev'n my heart too." And I propose  
to-night

To show you what is dearest to my heart,  
And my heart too.

'But solve me first a doubt.

I knew a man, nor many years ago;  
He had a faithful servant, one who loved  
His master more than all on earth beside.  
He falling sick, and seeming close on death,  
His master would not wait until he died,  
But bad his menial bear him from the  
door,

And leave him in the public way to die.  
I knew another, not so long ago,  
Who found the dying servant, took him  
home,

And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved his  
life.

I ask you now, should this first master  
claim

His service, whom does it belong to? him  
Who thrust him out, or him who saved his  
life?'

This question, so flung down before the  
guests,

And balanced either way by each, at length  
When some were doubtful how the law  
would hold,

Was handed over by consent of all  
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of  
phrase.

And he beginning languidly—his loss  
Weigh'd on him yet—but warming as he  
went,

Glanced at the point of law, to pass it by,  
Affirming that as long as either lived,  
By all the laws of love and gratefulness,  
The service of the one so saved was due

## THE LOVER'S TALE

All to the savor—adding, with a smile,  
The first for many weeks—a semi-smile  
As at a strong conclusion—'body and soul  
And life and limbs, all his to work his will.'

Then Julian made a secret sign to me  
To bring Camilla down before them all.  
And crossing her own picture as she came,  
And looking as much lovelier as herself  
Is lovelier than all others—on her head  
A diamond circlet, and from under this  
A veil, that seemed no more than gilded  
air,

Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze  
With seeds of gold—so, with that grace of  
hers,

Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,  
That flings a mist behind it in the sun—  
And bearing high in arms the mighty babe,  
The younger Julian, who himself was  
crown'd

With roses, none so rosy as himself—  
And over all her babe and her the jewels  
Of many generations of his house  
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had decked  
them out

As for a solemn sacrifice of love—  
So she came in:—I am long in telling it,  
I never yet beheld a thing so strange,  
Sad, sweet, and strange together—floated  
in—

While all the guests in mute amazement  
rose—

And slowly pacing to the middle hall,  
Before the board, there paused and stood,  
her breast

Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,  
Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.

But him she carried, him nor lights nor  
feast

Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men; who  
cared

Only to use his own, and staring wide  
And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd  
world

About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,  
When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

'My guests,' said Julian: 'you are  
honour'd now  
E'en to the uttermost: in her behold

Of all my treasures the most beautiful,  
Of all things upon earth the dearest to me.'  
Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,  
Led his dear lady to a chair of state.  
And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face  
Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again  
Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,  
And heard him muttering, 'So like, so like;  
She never had a sister. I knew none.  
Some cousin of his and hers—O God, so  
like!'

And then he suddenly ask'd her if she were.  
She shook, and cast her eyes down, and was  
dumb.

And then some other question'd if she  
came

From foreign lands, and still she did not  
speak.

Another, if the boy were hers: but she  
To all their queries answer'd not a word,  
Which made the amazement more, till one  
of them

Said, shuddering, 'Her spectre!' But his  
friend

Replied, in half a whisper, 'Not at least  
The spectre that will speak if spoken to.  
Terrible pity, if one so beautiful  
Prove, as I almost dread to find her,  
dumb!'

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd all:  
'She is but dumb, because in her you see  
That faithful servant whom we spoke  
about,

Obedient to her second master now;  
Which will not last. I have here to-night a  
guest

So bound to me by common love and  
loss—

What! shall I bind him more? in his  
behalf,

Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him  
That which of all things is the dearest to  
me,

Not only showing? and he himself pro-  
nounced

That my rich gift is wholly mine to give.

'Now all be dumb, and promise all of  
you

Not to break in on what I say by word

## THE LOVER'S TALE

Or whisper, while I show you all my heart.  
And then began the story of his love  
As here to-day, but not so wordily—  
The passionate moment would not suffer  
that—  
Past thro' his visions to the burial; thence  
Down to this last strange hour in his own  
hall;  
And then rose up, and with him all his  
guests  
Once more as by enchantment; all but he,  
Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell again,  
And sat as if in chains—to whom he said:

'Take my free gift, my cousin, for your  
wife;  
And were it only for the giver's sake,  
And tho' she seem so like the one you lost,  
Yet cast her not away so suddenly,  
Lest there be none left here to bring her  
back:  
I leave this land for ever.' Here he ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one hand,  
And bearing on one arm the noble babe,  
He slowly brought them both to Lionel.  
And there the widower husband and dead  
wife  
Rush'd each at each with a cry, that rather  
seem'd  
For some new death than for a life renew'd;  
Whereat the very babe began to wail;  
At once they turn'd, and caught and  
brought him in  
To their charm'd circle, and, half killing  
him  
With kisses, round him closed and clasp'd  
again.  
But Lionel, when at last he freed himself  
From wife and child, and lifted up a face  
All over glowing with the sun of life,  
And love, and boundless thanks—the sight  
of this  
So frightened our good friend, that turning  
to me  
And saying, 'It is over: let us go'—  
'There were our horses ready at the doors—  
We bad them no farewell, but mounting  
these  
He past for ever from his native land;  
And I with him, my Julian, back to mine.

## TO ALFRED TENNYSON

### MY GRANDSON

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is one with  
mine,  
Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's  
new wine,  
Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,  
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,  
Glorious poet who never hast written a line,  
Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is  
thine.  
May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name that  
is mine!

## THE FIRST QUARREL

### (IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT)

#### I

'WAIT a little,' you say, 'you are sure it 'll  
all come right,'  
But the boy was born i' trouble, an' looks  
so wan an' so white:  
Wait! an' once I ha' waited—I hadn't to  
wait for long.  
Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry.—No, no,  
you are doing me wrong!  
Harry and I were married: the boy can  
hold up his head,  
The boy was born in wedlock, but after  
my man was dead;  
I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an' I  
work an' I wait to the end.  
I am all alone in the world, an' you are my  
only friend.

#### II

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you the  
tale o' my life.  
When Harry an' I were children, he call'd  
me his own little wife;  
I was happy when I was with him, an'  
sorry when he was away,  
An' when we play'd together, I loved him  
better than play;  
He workt me the daisy chain—he made me  
the cowslip ball,  
He fought the boys that were rude, an' I  
loved him better than all.  
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at home  
in disgrace,  
I never could quarrel with Harry—I had  
but to look in his face.

## THE FIRST QUARREL

### III

There was a farmer in Dorset of Harry's  
kin, that had need  
Of a good stout lad at his farm; he sent,  
an' the father agreed;  
So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire  
farm for years an' for years;  
I walked with him down to the quay, poor  
lad, an' we parted in tears.  
The boat was beginning to move, we heard  
them a-ringing the bell,  
'I'll never love any but you, God bless you,  
my own little Nell.'

### IV

I was a child, an' he was a child, an' he  
came to harm;  
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt with  
him up at the farm,  
One had deceived her an' left her alone  
with her sin an' her shame,  
And so she was wicked with Harry; the  
girl was the most to blame.

### V

And years went over till I that was little  
had grown so tall,  
The men would say of the maids, 'Our  
Nelly's the flower of 'em all.'  
I didn't take heed o' *them*, but I taught  
myself all I could  
To make a good wife for Harry, when  
Harry came home for good.

### VI

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as  
happy too,  
For I heard it abroad in the fields 'I'll  
never love any but you;'  
'I'll never love any but you' the morning  
song of the lark,  
'I'll never love any but you' the nightin-  
gale's hymn in the dark.

### VII

And Harry came home at last, but he  
look'd at me sidelong and shy,  
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so many  
years had gone by,

I had grown so handsome and tall—that  
I might h' forgot him somehow—  
For he thought—there were other lads—  
he was fear'd to look at me now.

### VIII

Hard was the frost in the field, we were  
married o' Christmas day,  
Married among the red berries, an' all as  
merry as May—  
Those were the pleasant times, my house  
an' my man were my pride,  
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel a  
sailing with wind an' tide.

### IX

But work was scant in the Isle, tho' he  
tried the villages round,  
So Harry went over the Solent to see if  
work could be found;  
An' he wrote 'I ha' six weeks' work, little  
wife, so far as I know;  
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an' kiss  
you before I go.'

### X

So I set to righting the house, for wasn't  
he coming that day?  
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was  
push'd in a corner away,  
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a letter  
along wi' the rest,  
I had better ha' put my naked hand in a  
hornets' nest.

### XI

'Sweetheart'—this was the letter—this was  
the letter I read—  
'You promised to find me work near you,  
an' I wish I was dead—  
Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you  
haven't done it, my lad,  
An' I almost died o' your going away, an'  
I wish that I had.'

### XII

I too wish that I had—in the pleasant times  
that had past,  
Before I quarrell'd with Harry—*my* quarrel  
—the first an' the last.

## THE FIRST QUARREL

### XIII

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the letter that drove me wild,  
 An' he told it me all at once, as simple as any child,  
 'What can it matter, my lass, what I did wi' my single life?  
 I ha' been as true to you as ever a man to his wife;  
 An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst.' 'Then,' I said, 'I'm none o' the best.'  
 An' he smiled at me, 'Ain't you, my love? Come, come, little wife, let it rest!  
 The man isn't like the woman, no need to make such a stir.'  
 But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said 'You were keeping with her,  
 When I was a-loving you all along an' the same as before.'  
 An' he didn't speak for a while, an' he anger'd me more and more.  
 Then he patted my hand in his gentle way, 'Let bygones be!'  
 'Bygones! you kept yours hush'd,' I said, 'when you married me!  
 By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she*—in her shame an' her sin—  
 You'll have her to nurse my child, if I die o' my lying in!  
 You'll make her its second mother! I hate her—an' I hate you!'  
 Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha' beaten me black an' blue  
 Than ha' spoken as kind as you did, when I were so crazy wi' spite,  
 'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right.'

### XIV

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I watch'd him, an' when he came in  
 I felt that my heart was hard, he was all wet thro' to the skin,  
 An' I never said 'off wi' the wet,' I never said 'on wi' the dry,'  
 So I knew my heart was hard, when he came to bid me goodbye.  
 'You said that you hated me, Ellen, but that isn't true, you know;  
 I am going to leave you a bit—you'll kiss me before I go?'

### XV

'Going! you're going to her—kiss her—if you will,' I said—  
 I was near my time wi' the boy, I must ha' been light i' my head—  
 'I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!'—I didn't know well what I meant,  
 But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he turn'd *his* face an' he went.

### XVI

And then he sent me a letter, 'I've gotten my work to do;  
 You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I never loved any but you;  
 I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for what she wrote,  
 I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-night by the boat.'

### XVII

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought of him out at sea,  
 An' I felt I had been to blame; he was always kind to me.  
 'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right'—  
 An' the boat went down that night—the boat went down that night.

## RIZPAH

### 17—

#### I

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—  
 And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother, come out to me.'  
 Why should he call me to-night, when he knows that I cannot go?  
 For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at the snow.

#### II

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town.  
 The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the down,



## RIZPAH

When I cannot see my own hand, but am  
led by the creak of the chain,  
And grovel and grope for my son till I find  
myself drenched with the rain.

### III

Anything fallen again? nay—what was  
there left to fall?

I have taken them home, I have number'd  
the bones, I have hidden them all.

What am I saying? and what are *you*? do  
you come as a spy?

Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree  
falls so must it lie.

### IV

Who let her in? how long has she been?  
you—what have you heard?

Why did you sit so quiet? you never have  
spoken a word.

O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none  
of their spies—

But the night has crept into my heart, and  
begun to darken my eyes.

### V

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what  
should *you* know of the night,  
The blast and the burning shame and the  
bitter frost and the fright?

I have done it, while you were asleep—  
you were only made for the day.

I have gather'd my baby together—and  
now you may go your way.

### VI

Nay—for it's kind of you, Madam, to sit  
by an old dying wife.

But say nothing hard of my boy, I have  
only an hour of life.

I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he  
went out to die.

'They dared me to do it,' he said, and he  
never has told me a lie.

I whipt him for robbing an orchard once  
when he was but a child—

'The farmer dared me to do it,' he said;  
he was always so wild—

And idle—and couldn't be idle—my Willy  
—he never could rest.

The King should have made him a soldier,  
he would have been one of his best.

### VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and  
they never would let him be good;

They swore that he dare not rob the mail,  
and he swore that he would;

And he took no life, but he took one purse,  
and when all was done

He flung it among his fellows—I'll none  
of it, said my son.

### VIII

I came into court to the Judge and the  
lawyers. I told them my tale,  
God's own truth—but they kill'd him, they  
kill'd him for robbing the mail.

They hang'd him in chains for a show—  
we had always borne a good name—

To be hang'd for a thief—and then put  
away—isn't that enough shame?

Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! but  
they set him so high

That all the ships of the world could stare  
at him, passing by.

God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and  
horrible fowls of the air,

But not the black heart of the lawyer who  
kill'd him and hang'd him there.

### IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid  
him my last goodbye;

They had fasten'd the door of his cell.  
'O mother!' I heard him cry.

I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had  
something further to say,

And now I never shall know it. The jailer  
forced me away.

### X

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of  
my boy that was dead,

They seized me and shut me up: they  
fasten'd me down on my bed.

'Mother, O mother!'—he call'd in the dark  
to me year after year—

They beat me for that, they beat me—you  
know that I couldn't but hear;

And then at the last they found I had  
grown so stupid and still

They let me abroad again—but the  
creatures had worked their will.

## RIZPAH

### XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left—  
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you call it a theft?—  
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones that had laughed and had cried—  
Theirs? O no! they are mine—not theirs—they had moved in my side.

### XII

Do you think I was scared by the bones?  
I kiss'd 'em, I buried 'em all—  
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night by the churchyard wall.  
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,  
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy ground.

### XIII

They would scratch him up—they would hang him again on the cursed tree.  
Sin? O yes—we are sinners, I know—let all that be,  
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good will toward me—  
'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord'—let me hear it again;  
'Full of compassion and mercy—long-suffering.' Yes, O yes!  
For the lawyer is born but to murder—the Saviour lives but to bless.  
*He'll* never put on the black cap except for the worst of the worst,  
And the first may be last—I have heard it in church—and the last may be first.  
Suffering—O long-suffering—yes, as the Lord must know,  
Year after year in the mist and the wind and the shower and the snow.

### XIV

Heard, have you? what? they have told you he never repented his sin.  
How do they know it? are *they* his mother? are *you* of his kin?  
Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the downs began,  
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

### XV

Election, Election and Reprobation—it's all very well.  
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him in Hell.  
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has look'd into my care,  
And He means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy, I know not where.

### XVI

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul, that is all your desire:  
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone to the fire?  
I have been with God in the dark—go, go, you may leave me alone—  
You never have borne a child—you are just as hard as a stone.

### XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you mean to be kind,  
But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice in the wind—  
The snow and the sky so bright—he used but to call in the dark,  
And he calls to me now from the church and not from the gibbet—for hark!  
Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is coming—shaking the walls—  
Willy—the moon's in a cloud—Good-night. I am going. He calls.

## THE NORTHERN COBBLER

### I.

WAÄT till our Sally cooms in, fur thou mun a' sights<sup>1</sup> to tell.  
Eh, but I be maäin glad to seeä tha sa 'arty an' well.

<sup>1</sup> The vowels *ai*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *cratin'*, *datin'*, *what*, *at* (I), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

## THE NORTHERN COBBLER

'Cast awaäy on a disolut land wi' a vartical soon!<sup>1</sup>  
 Strange fur to goä fur to think whatsaäilors  
 a' seeän an' a' doon;  
 'Summat to drink—sa' 'ot?' I 'a nowt but  
 Adam's wine:  
 What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to the  
 'eät o' the line?

### II

'What's i' tha bottle a-stanning theer?'  
 I'll tell tha. Gin.  
 But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun goä  
 fur it down to the inn.  
 Naay—fur I be maäin-glad, but thaw tha  
 was iver sa dry,  
 Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer, an'  
 I'll tell tha why.

### III

Meä an' thy sister was married, when wur  
 it? back-end o' June,  
 Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well as a  
 fiddle i' tune:  
 I could fettle and clump owd booots and  
 shoes wi' the best on 'em all,  
 As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to  
 Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.  
 We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an' as  
 'appy as 'art could think,  
 An' then the babby wur burn, and then I  
 taäkes to the drink.

### IV

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw I be  
 hafe shaamed on it now,  
 We could sing a good song at the Plow, we  
 could sing a good song at the Plow;  
 Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd an'  
 hurted my huck,<sup>2</sup>  
 An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes  
 slaäpe down i' the squad an' the muck:  
 An' once I fowt wi' the Taailor—not hafe  
 ov a man, my lad—  
 Fur he scrawm'd an' scratted my faäce like  
 a cat, an' it maäde 'er sa mad  
 That Sally she turn'd a tongue-banger,<sup>3</sup>  
 an' raäted me, 'Sottin' thy braäins

<sup>1</sup> The oo short, as in 'wood'.  
<sup>2</sup> Hip. <sup>3</sup> Scold.

Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an'  
 hawmin'<sup>4</sup> about i' the laänes,  
 Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn't touch  
 thy 'at to the Squire;  
 An' I loook'd cock-eyed at my noäse an' I  
 seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire;  
 But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hallus as  
 droonk as a king,  
 Foalks' coostom flitted awaäy like a kite  
 wi' a brokken string.

### V

An' Sally she wesh'd foäls' cloäths to keep  
 the wolf fro' the door,  
 Eh but the moor she riled me, she druv me  
 to drink the moor,  
 Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd,  
 wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur 'id,  
 An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde, and  
 I weär'd it o' liquor, I did..

### VI

An' one night I cooms 'oam like a bull  
 gotten loose at a faäir,  
 An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an' cryin'  
 and teärin' 'er 'aair,  
 An' I tummled athurt the craädle an'  
 swear'd as I'd break ivry stick  
 O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied our  
 Sally a kick,  
 An' I mash'd the taables an' chairs, an' she  
 an' the babby beäl'd,<sup>5</sup>  
 Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did nor a  
 mortal beast o' the faäld.

### VII

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I seeäd  
 that our Sally went laamed  
 Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur  
 dreadful ashaamed;  
 An' Sally wur sloomy<sup>6</sup> an' draggle taäil'd  
 in an owd turn gown,  
 An' the babby's faäce wur'n't wesh'd an'  
 the 'ole 'ouse hupside down.

### VIII

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty an'  
 neät an' sweeät,  
 Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower fro'  
 'eäd to fecäit:

<sup>4</sup> Lounging. <sup>5</sup> Bellowed, cried out.  
<sup>6</sup> Sluggish, out of spirits.

## THE NORTHERN COBBLER

An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied 'er  
by Thursby thurn;  
Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a  
Sunday at murn,  
Couldn't see 'im, we 'eard 'im a-mountin'  
oop 'igher an' 'igher,  
An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e shined  
like a sparkle o' fire.  
'Doesn't tha see 'im,' she axes, 'fur I can'  
see 'im?' an' I

Secad nobbut the smile o' the sun as  
danced in 'er pratty blue eye;  
An' I says 'I mun gie tha a kiss,' an' Sally  
says 'Noa, thou moant,'  
But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother, an'  
Sally says 'doant!'

### IX

An' when we coom'd into Meeatin', at fust  
she wur all in a tew,  
But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn together like  
birds on a beugh;  
An' Muggins 'e preach'd o' Hell-fire an'  
the loov o' God fur men,  
An' then upo' coomin' awaay Sally gied  
me a kiss ov 'ersen.

### X

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick like  
Saatan as fell  
Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire—thaw  
theer's naw drinkin' i' Hell;  
Mea fur to kick our Sally as kep the wolf  
fro' the door,  
All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er as  
well as afoor.

### XI

Sa like a great num-cumpus I blubber'd  
awaay o' the bed—  
'Weant niver do it naw moor;' an' Sally  
lookt up an' she said,  
'I'll upowd it! tha weant; thou'rt like the  
rest o' the men,  
Thou'll goa sniffin' about the tap till tha  
does it agean.  
Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I knaws,  
as knaws tha sa well,  
That, if tha seads 'im an' smells 'im tha'll  
foller 'im slick into Hell.'

<sup>1</sup> I'll uphold it.

### XII

'Naay,' says I, 'fur I weant goa sniffin'  
about the tap.'  
'Weant tha?' she says, an' mysen I thowt  
i' mysen 'mayhap.'  
'Noa:' an' I started awaay like a shot, an'  
down to the Hinn,  
An' I browt what tha sees stannin' theer,  
yon big black bottle o' gin.

### XIII

'That caps owt,'<sup>2</sup> says Sally, an' saw she  
begins to cry,  
But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says to 'er,  
'Sally,' says I,  
'Stan' 'im theer i' the naame o' the Lord  
an' the power ov 'is Graace,  
Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll look my hennemy  
strait i' the faace,  
Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let ma  
look at 'im then,  
'E seeams naw moor nor watter, an' 'e's  
the Divil's oan sen.'

### XIV

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, couldn't do  
naw work an' all,  
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaaky, an' poonch'd  
my 'and wi' the hawl,  
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an'  
sattled 'ersen o' my knee,  
An' coaxd an' cooddled me oop till agean  
I feel'd mysen free.

### XV

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foalk stood  
a-gawmin'<sup>3</sup> in,  
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd instead  
of a quart o' gin;  
An' some on 'em said it wur watter—an'  
I wur chousin' the wife,  
Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur it  
nobbut to saave my life;  
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick ov 'is  
airm' an' 'e shaws it to me,  
'Feal thou this! thou can't grow this upo'  
watter!' says he.

<sup>2</sup> That's beyond everything.

<sup>3</sup> Staring vacantly.

## THE NORTHERN COBBLER

An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just as  
candles was lit,  
'Thou moänt do it,' he says, 'tha mun  
break 'im off bit by bit.'  
'Thou'rt but a Methody-man,' says Par-  
son, and laäys down 'is 'at,  
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, 'but I  
respects tha fur that;'  
An' Squire, his oan very sen, walks down  
fro' the 'All to see,  
An' 'e spansk 'is 'and into mine, 'fur I  
respects tha,' says 'e;  
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a wind  
fro' far an' wide,  
And browt me the booots to be cobbled  
fro' hafe the coontryside.

### XVI

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall stan to  
my dying daay;  
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in anoother  
kind of a waay,  
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I keeäps 'im  
clean an' bright,  
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts 'im,  
an' puts 'im back i' the light.

### XVII

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a  
quart? Naw doubt:  
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi' an'  
fowt it out.  
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I cared  
to taiste,  
But I moant, my lad, and I weänt, fur I'd  
feal mysen cleän disgraced.

### XVIII

An' once I said to the Missis, 'My lass,  
when I cooms to die,  
Smash the bottle to smithers, the Devil's in  
'im,' said I.  
But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if Sally  
be left aloän,  
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke 'im  
afor the Throän.

### XIX

Coom thou 'eer—yon laädy a-steppin'  
along the streät,  
Doesn't tha knaw 'er—sa pratty, an' fcät,  
an' neät, an' sweät?

Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe  
ammoot spick-span-new,  
An' Tommy's faace be as fresh as a codlin  
wesh'd i' the dew.

### XX

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we be  
a-goïn to dine,  
Baacon an' taates, an' a beslings puddin'  
an' Adam's wine;  
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun goa fur  
it down to the Hinn,  
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood, noä,  
not fur Sally's oan kin.

## THE REVENGE

### A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

#### I

AT FLORES in the Azores Sir Richard  
Grenville lay,  
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came  
flying from far away:  
'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have  
sighted fifty-three!'  
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: 'Fore  
God I am no coward;  
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships  
are out of gear,  
And the half my men are sick. I must fly,  
but follow quick.  
We are six ships of the line; can we fight  
with fifty-three?'

#### II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I know  
you are no coward;  
You fly them for a moment to fight with  
them again.  
But I've ninety men and more that are  
lying sick ashore.  
I should count myself the coward if I left  
them, my Lord Howard,  
To these Inquisition dogs and the devil-  
doms of Spain.'

#### III

So Lord Howard past away with five ships  
of war that day,

<sup>1</sup> A pudding made with the first milk of the  
cow after calving.

## THE REVENGE: A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

Till he melted like a cloud in the silent  
summer heaven;  
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick  
men from the land  
Very carefully and slow,  
Men of Bideford in Devon,  
And we laid them on the ballast down  
below;

For we brought them all aboard,  
And they blest him in their pain, that they  
were not left to Spain,  
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the  
glory of the Lord.

### IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the  
ship and to fight,  
And he sailed away from Flores till the  
Spaniard came in sight,  
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the  
weather bow.

'Shall we fight or shall we fly?  
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,  
For to fight is but to die!  
There'll be little of us left by the time this  
sun be set.'

And Sir Richard said again: 'We be all  
good English men.

Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the  
children of the devil,

For I never turn'd my back upon Don or  
devil yet.'

### V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we  
roar'd a hurrah, and so

The little Revenge ran on sheer into the  
heart of the foe,

With her hundred fighters on deck, and  
her ninety sick below;

For half of their fleet to the right and half  
to the left were seen,

And the little Revenge ran on thro' the  
long sea-lane between.

### VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down  
from their decks and laugh'd,

Thousands of their seamen made mock at  
the mad little craft

Running on and on, till delay'd  
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of  
fifteen hundred tons,  
And up-shadowing high above us with her  
yawning tiers of guns,  
Took the breath from our sails, and we  
stay'd.

### VII

And while now the great San Philip hung  
above us like a cloud

Whence the thunderbolt will fall

Long and loud,

Four galleons drew away

From the Spanish fleet that day,

And two upon the larboard and two upon  
the starboard lay,

And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

### VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she be-  
thought herself and went

Having that within her womb that had left  
her ill content;

And the rest they came aboard us, and they  
fought us hand to hand,

For a dozen times they came with their  
pikes and musqueteers,

And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a  
dog that shakes his ears

When he leaps from the water to the land.

### IX

And the sun went down, and the stars  
came out far over the summer sea,

But never a moment ceased the fight of the  
one and the fifty-three.

Ship after ship, the whole night long, their  
high-built galleons came,

Ship after ship, the whole night long, with  
her battle-thunder and flame;

Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew  
back with her dead and her shame.

For some were sunk and many were shat-  
ter'd, and so could fight us no more—

God of battles, was ever a battle like this in  
the world before?

### X

For he said 'Fight on! fight on!  
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;

## THE REVENGE: A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

And it chanced that, when half of the short  
summer night was gone,  
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left  
the deck,  
But a bullet struck him that was dressing  
it suddenly dead,  
And himself he was wounded again in the  
side and the head,  
And he said 'Fight on! fight on!'

### XI

And the night went down, and the sun  
smiled out far over the summer sea,  
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides  
lay round us all in a ring;  
But they dared not touch us again, for they  
fear'd that we still could sting,  
So they watch'd what the end would be.  
And we had not fought them in vain,  
But in perilous plight were we,  
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were  
slain,  
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life  
In the crash of the cannonades and the  
desperate strife;  
And the sick men down in the hold were  
most of them stark and cold,  
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and  
the powder was all of it spent;  
And the masts and the rigging were lying  
over the side;  
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,  
'We have fought such a fight for a day and  
a night  
As may never be fought again!  
We have won great glory, my men!  
And a day less or more  
At sea or ashore,  
We die—does it matter when?  
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink  
her, split her in twain!  
Fall into the hands of God, not into the  
hands of Spain!'

### XII

And the gunner said 'Ay, ay,' but the sea-  
men made reply:  
'We have children, we have wives,  
And the Lord hath spared our lives.  
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we  
yield, to let us go;

We shall live to fight again and to strike  
another blow.'  
And the lion there lay dying, and they  
yielded to the foe.

### XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flag-  
ship bore him then,  
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir  
Richard caught at last,  
And they praised him to his face with their  
courtly foreign grace;  
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:  
'I have fought for Queen and Faith like a  
valiant man and true;  
I have only done my duty as a man is  
bound to do:  
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville  
die!'  
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

### XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been  
so valiant and true,  
And had holden the power and glory of  
Spain so cheap  
That he dared her with one little ship and  
his English few;  
Was he devil or man? He was devil for  
aught they knew,  
But they sank his body with honour down  
into the deep,  
And they mann'd the Revenge with a  
swarthier alien crew,  
And away she sail'd with her loss and  
long'd for her own;  
When a wind from the lands they had  
ruin'd awoke from sleep,  
And the water began to heave and the  
weather to moan,  
And or ever that evening ended a great gale  
blew,  
And a wave like the wave that is raised by  
an earthquake grew,  
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails  
and their masts and their flags,  
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the  
shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,  
And the little Revenge herself went down  
by the island crags  
To be lost evermore in the main.

## THE SISTERS

### THE SISTERS

THEY have left the doors ajar; and by their  
clash,  
And prelude on the keys, I know the song,  
Their favourite—which I call 'The Tables  
Turned.'  
Evelyn begins it 'O diviner Air.'

#### EVELYN

O diviner Air,  
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust, the  
glare,  
Far from out the west in shadowing  
showers,  
Over all the meadow baked and bare,  
Making fresh and fair  
All the bowers and the flowers,  
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,  
Over all this weary world of ours,  
Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that—you scarce could better  
that.  
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

#### EDITH

O diviner light,  
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with  
night,  
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding  
showers,  
Far from out a sky for ever bright,  
Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,  
Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,  
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,  
Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices—and them-  
selves!  
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the  
other,  
As one is somewhat graver than the other—  
Edith than Evelyn. Your good Uncle,  
whom  
You count the father of your fortune, longs  
For this alliance: let me ask you then,  
Which voice most takes you? for I do not  
doubt  
Being a watchful parent, you are taken  
With one or other: tho' sometimes I fear  
You may be flickering, fluttering in a doubt

Between the two—which must not be—  
which might  
Be death to one: they both are beautiful:  
Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says  
The common voice, if one may trust it: she?  
No! but the paler and the graver, Edith.  
Woo her and gain her then: no wavering,  
boy!

➤ The graver is perhaps the one for you  
Who jest and laugh so easily and so well.  
For love will go by contrast, as by likes.

No sisters ever prized each other more.  
Not so: their mother and her sister loved  
More passionately still.

But that my best  
And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes it,  
And that I know you worthy everyway  
To be my son, I might, perchance, be loath  
To part them, or part from them: and yet  
one

Should marry, or all the broad lands in  
your view  
From this bay window—which our house  
has held  
Three hundred years—will pass collater-  
ally.

My father with a child on either knee,  
A hand upon the head of either child,  
Smoothing their locks, as golden as his own  
Were silver, 'get them wedded' would he  
say.

And once my prattling Edith ask'd him  
'why?'

Ay, why? said he, 'for why should I go  
lame?'

Then told them of his wars, and of his  
wound.

For see—this wine—the grape from  
whence it flow'd

Was blackening on the slopes of Portugal,  
When that brave soldier, down the terrible  
ridge

Plunged in the last fierce charge at  
Waterloo,

And caught the laming bullet. He left me  
this,

Which yet retains a memory of its youth,  
As I of mine, and my first passion. Come!  
Here's to your happy union with my child!



## THE SISTERS

Yet must you change your name: no  
fault of mine!

You say that you can do it as willingly  
As birds make ready for their bridal-time  
By change of feather: for all that, my boy,  
Some birds are sick and sullen when they  
moul't.

An old and worthy name! but mine that  
stirr'd

Among our civil wars and earlier too  
Among the Roses, the more venerable.  
I care not for a name—no fault of mine.  
Once more—a happier marriage than my  
own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on the  
plain.

The highway running by it leaves a breadth  
Of sward to left and right, where, long ago,  
One bright May morning in a world of  
song,

I lay at leisure, watching overhead  
The acrial poplar wave, an amber spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landaulet  
Whirl'd by, which, after it had past me,  
show'd

Turning my way, the loveliest face on earth.  
The face of one there sitting opposite,  
On whom I brought a strange unhappiness,  
That time I did not see.

Love at first sight  
May seem—with goodly rhyme and reason  
for it—

Possible—at first glimpse, and for a face  
Gone in a moment—strange. Yet once,  
when first

I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,  
A moonless night with storm—one light-  
ning-fork

Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I loiter'd  
there

The full day after, yet in retrospect  
That less than momentary thunder-sketch  
Of lake and mountain conquers all the day.

The Sun himself has limn'd the face  
for me.

Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as well.  
For look you here—the shadows are too  
deep,

And like the critic's blurring comment  
make

The veriest beauties of the work appear  
The darkest faults: the sweet eyes frown:  
the lips

Seem but a gash. My sole memorial  
Of Edith—no, the other,—both indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro'  
sense and soul

And by the poplar vanish'd—to be found  
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the tall  
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping  
beechen boughs

Of our New Forest. I was there alone:  
The phantom of the whirling landaulet  
For ever past me by: when one quick peal  
Of laughter drew me thro' the glimmering  
glades

Down to the snowlike sparkle of a cloth  
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face again,  
My Rosalind in this Arden—Edith—all  
One bloom of youth, health, beauty, happi-  
ness,

And moved to merriment at a passing jest.

There one of those about her knowing  
me

Call'd me to join them; so with these I  
spent

What seem'd my crowning hour, my day  
of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully,  
The worse for her, for me! was I content?  
Ay—no, not quite; for now and then I  
thought

Laziness, vague love-longings, the bright  
May,

Had made a heated haze to magnify  
The charm of Edith—that a man's ideal  
Is high in Heaven, and lodged with Plato's  
God,

Not findable here—content, and not con-  
tent,

In some such fashion as a man may be  
That having had the portrait of his friend  
Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and says,  
'Good! very like! not altogether he.'

As yet I had not bound myself by words,  
Only, believing I loved Edith, made

## THE SISTERS

Edith love *me*. Then came the day when I,  
Flattering myself that all my doubts were  
fools

Born of the fool this Age that doubts of  
all—

Not I that day of Edith's love or mine—  
Had braced my purpose to declare myself:  
I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.

The golden gates would open at a word.

I spoke it—told her of my passion, seen  
And lost and found again, had got so far,  
Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell—I  
heard

Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the  
doors—

On a sudden after two Italian years  
Had set the blossom of her health again,  
The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd—  
there,

There was the face, and altogether she.  
The mother fell about the daughter's neck,  
The sisters closed in one another's arms,  
Their people throng'd about them from  
the hall,

And in the thick of question and reply  
I fled the house, driven by one angel face,  
And all the Furies.

I was bound to her;  
I could not free myself in honour—bound  
Not by the sounded letter of the word,  
But counterpressures of the yielded hand  
That timorously and faintly echoed mine,  
Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of her  
eyes

Upon me when she thought I did not see—  
Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but could  
I wed her

Loving the other? do her that great wrong?  
Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-  
morn?

Had I not known where Love, at first a fear,  
Grew after marriage to full height and  
form?

Yet after marriage, that mock-sister there—  
Brother-in-law—the fiery nearness of it—  
Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood—  
What end but darkness could ensue from  
this

For all the three? So Love and Honour  
jarr'd

Tho' Love and Honour join'd to raise the  
full

High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up and  
down

Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote:

'My mother bids me ask' (I did not tell  
you—

A widow with less guile than many a child.  
God help the wrinkled children that are  
Christ's

As well as the plump cheek—she wrought  
us harm,

Poor soul, not knowing) 'are you ill?' (so  
ran

The letter) 'you have not been here of  
late.

You will not find me here. At last I go  
On that long-promised visit to the North.  
I told your wayside story to my mother  
And Evelyn. She remembers you. Farewell.  
Pray come and see my mother. Almost  
blind

With ever-growing cataract, yet she thinks  
She sees you when she hears. Again fare-  
well.'

Cold words from one I had hoped to  
warm so far

That I could stamp my image on her heart!  
'Pray come and see my mother, and fare-  
well.'

Cold, but as welcome as free airs of heaven  
After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish,  
strange!

What dwarfs are men! my strangled vanity  
Utter'd a stifled cry—to have vex't myself  
And all in vain for her—cold heart or none—  
No bride for me. Yet so my path was clear  
To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.

For Evelyn knew not of my former suit,  
Because the simple mother work'd upon  
By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.  
And Edith would be bridesmaid on the day.

But on that day, not being all at ease,  
I from the altar glancing back upon her,  
Before the first 'I will' was utter'd, saw

## THE SISTERS

The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, passion-  
less—  
'No harm, no harm' I turn'd again, and  
placed  
My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no  
word,  
She wept no tear, but round my Evelyn  
clung  
In utter silence for so long, I thought  
'What, will she never set her sister free?'

We left her, happy each in each, and  
then,  
As tho' the happiness of each in each  
Were not enough, must fain have torrents,  
lakes,  
Hills, the great things of Nature and the  
fair,  
To lift us as it were from commonplace,  
And help us to our joy. Better have sent  
Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth,  
To change with her horizon, if true Love  
Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would not  
live  
Save that I think this gross hard-seeming  
world  
Is our misshaping vision of the Powers  
Behind the world, that make our griefs our  
gains.

For on the dark night of our marriage-  
day  
The great Tragedian, that had quench'd  
herself  
In that assumption of the bridesmaid—she  
That loved me—our true Edith—her brain  
broke  
With over-acting, till she rose and fled  
Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn rain  
To the deaf church—to be let in—to pray  
Before *that* altar—so I think; and there  
They found her beating the hard Protest-  
ant doors.  
She died and she was buried ere we knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak. At once  
The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that had  
sunn'd

The morning of our marriage, past away:  
And on our home-return the daily want  
Of Edith in the house, the garden, still  
Haunted us like her ghost; and by and by,  
Either from that necessity for talk  
Which lives with blindness, or plain  
innocence  
Of nature, or desire that her lost child  
Should earn from both the praise of  
heroism,  
The mother broke her promise to the dead,  
And told the living daughter with what  
love  
Edith had welcomed my brief wooing of  
her,  
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and death.

Henceforth that mystic bond betwixt  
the twins—  
Did I not tell you they were twins?—  
prevail'd  
So far that no caress could win my wife  
Back to that passionate answer of full heart  
I had from her at first. Not that her love,  
Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power of  
love,  
Had lessen'd, but the mother's garrulous  
wail  
For ever woke the unhappy Past again,  
Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be my  
bride,  
Put forth cold hands between us, and I  
fear'd  
The very fountains of her life were chill'd;  
So took her thence, and brought her here,  
and here  
She bore a child, whom reverently we call'd  
Edith; and in the second year was born  
A second—this I named from her own self,  
Evelyn; then two weeks—no more—she  
joined,  
In and beyond the grave, that one she  
loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,  
Thro' dreams by night and trances of the  
day,  
The sisters glide about me hand in hand,  
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell  
One from the other, no, nor care to tell  
One from the other, only know they come,

## THE SISTERS

They smile upon me, till, remembering  
all  
The love they both have borne me, and the  
love  
I bore them both—divided as I am  
From either by the stillness of the grave—  
I know not which of these I love the best.

But *you* love Edith; and her own true  
eyes  
Are traitors to her; our quick Evelyn—  
The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they talk,  
And not without good reason, my good  
son—  
Is yet untouched: and I that hold them  
both  
Dearest of all things—well, I am not sure—  
But if there lie a preference eitherway,  
And in the rich vocabulary of Love  
'Most dearest' be a true superlative—  
I think I likewise love your Edith most.

## THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL<sup>1</sup>

### I

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha my lass, fur New  
Squire coom'd last night.  
Butter an' heggs—yis—yis. I'll goa wi' tha  
back: all right;  
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I warrants  
the heggs be as well,  
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya  
breaks the shell.

### II

Sit thysen down fur a bit: hev a glass o'  
cowslip wine!  
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as thaw  
they was gells o' mine,  
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire an'  
'is darters an' me,  
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I niver  
not took to she:  
But Nelly, the last of the cletch,<sup>2</sup> I liked  
'er the fust on 'em all,  
Fur hoffens we talkt o' my darter es died  
o' the fever at fall:

<sup>1</sup> See note to 'Northern Cobbler.'

<sup>2</sup> A brood of chickens.

An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord, but  
Miss Annie she said it wur draains,  
Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an'  
arn'd naw thanks fur 'er paains.  
Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord my childer,  
I han't gotten none!  
Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taail in 'is  
'and, an' owd Squire's gone.

### III

Fur 'staate be i' taail, my lass: tha dosn'  
know what that be?  
But I knaws the law, I does, for the lawyer  
ha tow'd it me.  
'When theer's naw 'ead to a 'Ouse by the  
fault o' that ere maale—  
The gells they counts fur nowt, and the  
next un he taakes the taail.'

### IV

What be the next un like? can tha tell ony  
harm on 'im, lass?—  
Naay sit down—naw 'urry—sa cowl!—  
hev another glass!  
Straänge an' cowl fur the time! we may  
happen a fall o' snaw—  
Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm, but  
I likes to know.  
An' I 'oäps es 'e beant boooklarn'd: but 'e  
dosn' not coom fro' the shere;  
We'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an' we  
haates boooklarnin' ere.

### V

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an'  
niver lookt arter the land—  
Whoats or tonups or taates—'e 'ed hallus  
a boook 'i 'is 'and,  
Hallus aloan wi' 'is boooks, thaw nigh upo'  
seventy year.  
An' boooks, what's boooks? thou knaws  
thebbe naither 'ere nor theer.

### VI

An' the gells, they hedn't naw taails, an'  
the lawyer he tow'd it me  
That 'is taail were soa tied up es he  
couldn't cut down a tree!  
'Drat the trees,' says I, to be sewer I  
haates 'em, my lass,  
Fur we puts the muck o' the land an' they  
sucks the muck fro' the grass.

## THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL

### VII

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an' gied  
to the tramps goin' by—  
An' all o' the wust i' the parish—wi'  
hoffens a drop in 'is eye.  
An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her awn  
ridin-erse to 'ersen,  
An' they rampaged about wi' their grooms,  
an' was 'untin' arter the men,  
An' hallus a-dallackt<sup>1</sup> an' dizen'd out, an'  
a-buyin' new cloathes,  
While 'e sit like a great glimmer-gowk<sup>2</sup> wi'  
'is glasses athurt 'is noase,  
An' 'is noase sa grufted wi' snuff es it  
couldn't be scroob'd awaay,  
Fur atween 'is readin' an' writing' 'e sniffit  
up a box in a daäy,  
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor arter  
the birds wi' 'is gun,  
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e leaved  
it to Charlie 'is son,  
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but  
Charlie 'e cotch'd the pike,  
For 'e warn't not burn to the land, an' 'e  
didn't take kind to it like;  
But I ears es 'e'd gie fur a howry<sup>3</sup> owd book  
thutty pound an' moor,  
An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn sen,  
sa I know'd es 'e'd coom to be poor;  
An' 'e gied—I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow  
much—fur an owd scrapped stoän,  
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an' 'e  
got a brown pot an' a boan,  
An' e' bowt owd money, es wouldn't goä,  
wi' good gowd o' the Queen,  
An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naakt an'  
which was a shaame to be seen;  
But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e niver  
not seed to owt,  
An' 'e niver knowd nowt but boooks, an'  
boooks, as thou knows, beant nowt.

### VIII

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she lived  
she kep 'em all clear,  
Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed none  
of 'er darters 'ere;

<sup>1</sup> Overdrest in gay colours.

<sup>2</sup> Owl.

<sup>3</sup> Filthy.

But arter she died we was all es one, the  
childer an' me,  
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens  
we hed 'em to tea.  
Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses 'ud  
talk o' their Missis's waays,  
An' the Missis talk'd o' the lasses.—I'll  
tell tha some o' these daays.  
Hoanly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop,  
like 'er mother afoor—  
'Er an' 'er blessed darter—they niver  
derken'd my door.

### IX

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till 'e'd  
gotten a fright at last,  
An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's  
letters they foller'd sa fast;  
But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e  
says to 'im, meek as a mouse,  
'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taail, or the  
gells 'ull goa to the 'Ouse,  
Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I 'oaps  
es thou'll 'elp me a bit,  
An' if thou'll 'grec to cut off thy taail I may  
saave mysen yit.'

### X

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e  
swears, an' 'e says to 'im 'Noa.  
I've gotten the 'staate by the taail an' be  
dang'd if I iver let goa!  
Coom! coom! feyther, 'e says, 'why  
shouldn't thy boooks be sowd?  
I hears es soom o' thy boooks mebbe worth  
their weight i' gowd.'

### XI

Heäps an' heäps o' boooks, I ha' see'd 'em,  
belong'd to the Squire,  
But the lasses 'ed teard out leäves i' the  
middle to kindle the fire;  
Sa moäst on 'is owd big boooks fetch'd  
nigh to nowt at the saale,  
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to git  
'im to cut off 'is taail.

### XII

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes—'e were  
that outdacious at 'oam,  
Not thaw ya went fur to raake out Hell wi'  
a small-tooth coämb—

## THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL

Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an' droonk  
wi' the farmer's aäle,  
Mad wi' the lasses an' all—an' 'e wouldn't  
cut off the taail.

### XIII

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and a  
thurn be a-grawin' theer,  
I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the Maäy es  
I see'd it to-year—  
'Theerabouts Charlie joompt—and it gied  
me a scare tother night,  
Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoast i' the  
derk, fur it loookt sa white.  
'Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp!—thaw the  
banks o' the beck be sa tan high,  
Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un, thaw  
niver a hair wur awry;  
But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'  
Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,  
Sa theer wur a hend o' the taail, fur 'e lost  
'is taail i' the beck.

### XIV

Sa 'is taail wur lost an' 'is boobooks wur gone  
an' 'is boy wur dead,  
An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but 'e  
niver not lift oop 'is 'ead:  
Hallus a soft un Squire! an' 'e smiled, fur  
'e hedn't naw friend,  
Sa feyther an' son was buried togither, an'  
this wur the hend.

### XV

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the  
mooncy, but hes the pride,  
'E reads of a sewer an' sartin 'oap o' the  
tother side;  
But I beänt that sewer es the Lord, how-  
siver they praäy'd an' praay'd,  
Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leaves theer  
debts to be paaid.  
Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo' poor  
owd Squire i' the wood,  
An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur they  
weänt niver coom to naw good.

### XVI

Fur Molly the long un she walkt awaäy wi'  
a hofficer lad,  
An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin, sa o' coorse  
she be gone to the bad!

An' Lucy wur laame o' one leg, sweet'arts  
she niver 'ed none—  
Straange an' unheppen<sup>1</sup> Miss Lucy! we  
naamed her 'Dot an' gaw one!  
An' Hctty wur weak i' the hattics, wi'out  
ony harm i' the legs,  
An' the fever 'ed baaked Jinny's 'ead as  
bald as one o' them heggs,  
An' Nelly wur up fro' the craadle as big i'  
the mouth as a cow,  
An' saw she mun hammergrate,<sup>2</sup> lass, or  
she weant git a maate onyhow!  
An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me afoor  
my awn foalks to my faace  
'A hignorant village wife as 'ud heve to be  
larn'd her awn plaäce,'  
Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes now  
be a-grawin' sa howd,  
I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beant not  
fit to be towld!

### XVII

Sa I didn't not taake it kindly ov owd Miss  
Annie to saay  
Es I should be talkin ageän 'em, es soon es  
they went awaäy,  
Fur, laws! 'ow I cried when they went,  
an' our Nelly she gied me 'er 'and,  
Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire an' 'is  
gells es belong'd to the land;  
Boobooks, es I said afoor, thebbe neyther 'ere  
nor theer!  
But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs fur  
huppuuds o' twenty year.

### XVIII

An' they hallus paaid what I hax'd, sa I  
hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,  
An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an' they  
knaw'd what a hegg wur an' all;  
Hugger-mugger they lived, but they wasn't  
that easy to please,  
Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they laaid  
big heggs es tha seesas;  
An' I niver puts saame<sup>3</sup> i' my butter, they  
does it at Willis's farm,  
Taaste another drop o' the wine—tweant  
do tha naw harm.

<sup>1</sup> Ungainly, awkward.

<sup>2</sup> Emigrate.

<sup>3</sup> Lard.

## THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL

### XIX

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taail in 'is  
'and, an' owd Squire's gone;  
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter my  
nightcap wur on;  
Sa I hadn't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he  
coom'd last night sa laäte—  
Pluksh! ! ' the hens i' the peäs! why  
didn't tha hesp the gaäte?

### IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

#### EMMIE

##### I

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I never  
had seen him before,  
But he sent a chill to my heart when I saw  
him come in at the door,  
Fresh from the surgery-schools of France  
and of other lands—  
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big  
merciless hands!  
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes, but  
they said too of him  
He was happier using the knife than in  
trying to save the limb,  
And that I can well believe, for he look'd  
so coarse and so red,  
I could think he was one of those who  
would break their jests on the dead,  
And mangle the living dog that had loved  
him and fawn'd at his knee—  
Drench'd with the hellish ooralı—that ever  
such things should be!

##### II

Here was a boy—I am sure that some of  
our children would die  
But for the voice of Love, and the smile,  
and the comforting eye—  
Here was a boy in the ward, every bone  
seem'd out of its place—  
Caught in a mill and crush'd—it was all  
but a hopeless case:  
And he handled him gently enough; but  
his voice and his face were not kind,  
And it was but a hopeless case, he had seen  
it and made up his mind,

<sup>1</sup> A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands  
to scare trespassing fowl.

And he said to me roughly 'The lad will  
need little more of your care.'  
'All the more need,' I told him, 'to seek  
the Lord Jesus in prayer;  
They are all his children here, and I pray  
for them all as my own.'  
But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good woman, can  
prayer set a broken bone?'  
Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I  
know that I heard him say  
'All very well—but the good Lord Jesus  
has had his day.'

##### III

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd. It  
will come by and by.  
O how could I serve in the wards if the  
hope of the world were a lie?  
How could I bear with the sights and the  
loathsome smells of disease  
But that He said 'Ye do it to me, when ye  
do it to these?'

##### IV

So he went. And we past to this ward where  
the younger children are laid:  
Here is the cot of our orphan, our darling,  
our meek little maid;  
Empty you see just now! We have lost her  
who loved her so much—  
Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sensitive  
plant to the touch;  
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often  
moved me to tears,  
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have found  
in a child of her years—  
Nay you remember our Emmie; you used  
to send her the flowers;  
How she would smile at 'em, play with  
'em, talk to 'em hours after hours!  
They that can wander at will where the  
works of the Lord are reveal'd  
Little guess what joy can be got from a  
cowslip out of the field;  
Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are all  
they can know of the spring,  
They freshen and sweeten the wards like  
the waft of an Angel's wing;  
And she lay with a flower in one hand and  
her thin hands crost on her breast—  
Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire, and  
we thought her at rest,

## IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doctor said  
 'Poor little dear,  
 Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she'll never  
 live thro' it, I fear.'

### V

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as far  
 as the head of the stair,  
 Then I return'd to the ward; the child  
 didn't see I was there.

### VI

Never since I was nurse, had I been so  
 grieved and so vext!  
 Emmie had heard him. Softly she call'd  
 from her cot to the next,  
 'He says I shall never live thro' it, O Annie,  
 what shall I do?'  
 Annie consider'd. 'If I,' said the wise little  
 Annie, 'was you,  
 I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to help  
 me, for, Emmie, you see,  
 It's all in the picture there: "Little children  
 should come to me."'  
 (Meaning the print that you gave us, I find  
 that it always can please  
 Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with  
 children about his knees.)  
 'Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, 'but then if  
 I call to the Lord,  
 How should he know that it's me? such a  
 lot of beds in the ward!'  
 That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she  
 consider'd and said:  
 'Emmie, you put out your arms, and you  
 leave 'em outside on the bed—  
 The Lord has so *much* to see to! but,  
 Emmie, you tell it him plain,  
 It's the little girl with her arms lying out  
 on the counterpane.'

### VII

I had sat three nights by the child—I could  
 not watch her for four—  
 My brain had begun to reel—I felt I could  
 do it no more.  
 That was my sleeping-night, but I thought  
 that it never would pass.  
 There was a thunderclap once, and a clatter  
 of hail on the glass,

And there was a phantom cry that I heard  
 as I tost about,  
 The motherless bleat of a lamb in the  
 storm and the darkness without;  
 My sleep was broken besides with dreams  
 of the dreadful knife  
 And fears for our delicate Emmie who  
 scarce would escape with her life;  
 Then in the gray of the morning it seem'd  
 she stood by me and smiled,  
 And the doctor came at his hour, and we  
 went to see to the child.

### VIII

He had brought his ghastly tools: we be-  
 lieved her asleep again—  
 Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out  
 on the counterpane;  
 Say that His day is done! Ah why should  
 we care what they say?  
 The Lord of the children had heard her,  
 and Emmie had past away.

## DEDICATORY POEM TO THE PRINCESS ALICE

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that, which  
 lived  
 True life, live on—and if the fatal kiss,  
 Born of true life and love, divorce thee not  
 From earthly love and life—if what we call  
 The spirit flash not all at once from out  
 This shadow into Substance—then perhaps  
 The mellow'd murmur of the people's  
 praise  
 From thine own State, and all our breadth  
 of realm,  
 Where Love and Longing dress thy deeds  
 in light,  
 Ascends to thee; and this March morn that  
 sees  
 Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-bloom  
 Break thro' the yews and cypress of thy  
 grave,  
 And thine Imperial mother smile again.  
 May send one ray to thee! and who can  
 tell—  
 Thou—England's England-loving daugh-  
 ter—thou  
 Dying so English thou wouldst have her  
 flag



## DEDICATORY POEM TO THE PRINCESS ALICE

Borne on thy coffin—where is he can swear  
But that some broken gleam from our poor  
earth  
May touch thee, while remembering thee,  
I lay  
At thy pale feet this ballad of the deeds  
Of England, and her banner in the East?

### THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW

#### I

BANNER of England, not for a season, O  
banner of Britain, hast thou  
Floated in conquering battle or slapt to the  
battle-cry!  
Never with mightier glory than when we  
had rear'd thee on high  
Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly  
siege of Lucknow—  
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but ever  
we raised thee anew,  
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner  
of England blew.

#### II

Frail were the works that defended the  
hold that we held with our lives—  
Women and children among us, God help  
them, our children and wives!  
Hold it we might—and for fifteen days or  
for twenty at most.  
'Never surrender, I charge you, but every  
man die at his post!'  
Voice of the dead whom we loved, our  
Lawrence the best of the brave:  
Cold were his brows when we kiss'd him—  
we laid him that night in his grave.  
'Every man die at his post!' and there  
hail'd on our houses and halls  
Death from their rifle-bullets, and death  
from their cannon-balls,  
Death in our innermost chamber, and  
death at our slight barricade,  
Death while we stood with the musket, and  
death while we stooped to the spade,  
Death to the dying, and wounds to the  
wounded, for often there fell,  
Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro' it,  
their shot and their shell,

Death—for their spies were among us, their  
marksmen were told of our best,  
So that the brute bullet broke thro' the  
brain that could think for the rest;  
Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and  
bullets would rain at our feet—  
Fire from ten thousand at once of the  
rebels that girdled us round—  
Death at the glimpse of a finger from over  
the breadth of a street,  
Death from the heights of the mosque and  
the palace, and death in the ground!  
Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine! down,  
down! and creep thro' the hole!  
Keep the revolver in hand! you can hear  
him—the murderous mole!  
Quiet, ah! quiet—wait till the point of the  
pickaxe be thro'!  
Click with the pick, coming nearer and  
nearer again than before—  
Now let it speak, and you fire, and the dark  
pioneer is no more;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner  
of England blew!

#### III

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many  
times, and it chanced on a day  
Soon as the blast of that underground  
thunderclap echo'd away,  
Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur like  
so many fiends in their hell—  
Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on  
volley, and yell upon yell—  
Fiercely on all the defences our myriad  
enemy fell.  
What have they done? where is it? Out  
yonder. Guard the Redan!  
Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the  
Bailey-gate! storm, and it ran  
Surging and swaying all round us, as ocean  
on every side  
Plunges and heaves at a bank that is daily  
devour'd by the tide—  
So many thousands that if they be bold  
enough, who shall escape?  
Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall know  
we are soldiers and men!  
Ready! take aim at their leaders—their  
masses are gapp'd with our grape—

## THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW

Backward they reel like the wave, like the  
wave flinging forward again,  
Flying and foil'd at the last by the handful  
they could not subdue;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner  
of England blew.

### IV

Handful of men as we were, we were Eng-  
lish in heart and in limb,  
Strong with the strength of the race to  
command, to obey, to endure,  
Each of us fought as if hope for the garrison  
hung but on him;  
Still—could we watch at all points? we  
were every day fewer and fewer.  
There was a whisper among us, but only a  
whisper that past:  
'Children and wives—if the tigers leap into  
the fold unawares—  
Every man die at his post—and the foe may  
outlive us at last—  
Better to fall by the hands that they love,  
than to fall into theirs!'  
Roar upon roar in a moment two mines by  
the enemy sprung  
Clove into perilous chasms our walls and  
our poor palisades.  
Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure  
that your hand be as true!  
Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed  
are your flank fusillades—  
Twice do we hurl them to earth from the  
ladders to which they had clung,  
Twice from the ditch where they shelter  
we drive them with hand-grenades;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner  
of England blew.

### V

Then on another wild morning another  
wild earthquake out-tore  
Clean from our lines of defence ten or  
twelve good paces or more.  
Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden there  
from the light of the sun—  
One has leapt up on the breach, crying out:  
'Follow me, follow me!'  
Mark him—he falls! then another, and  
*him* too, and down goes he.

Had they been bold enough then, who can  
tell but the traitors had won?  
Boardings and rafters and doors—an em-  
brasure! make way for the gun!  
Now double-charge it with grape! It is  
charged and we fire, and they run.  
Praise to our Indian brothers, and let the  
dark face have his due!  
Thanks to the kindly dark faces who fought  
with us, faithful and few,  
Fought with the bravest among us, and  
drove them, and smote them, and  
slew,  
That ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner in India blew.

### VI

Men will forget what we suffer and not  
what we do. We can fight!  
But to be soldier all day and be sentinel all  
thro' the night—  
Ever the mine and assault, our sallies, their  
lying alarms,  
Bugles and drums in the darkness, and  
shoutings and soundings to arms,  
Ever the labour of fifty that had to be done  
by five,  
Ever the marvel among us that one should  
be left alive,  
Ever the day with its traitorous death from  
the loopholes around,  
Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to  
be laid in the ground,  
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge  
of cataract skies,  
Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite  
torment of flies,  
Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing  
over an English field,  
Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that  
*would* not be heal'd,  
Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-  
pitiless knife,—  
Torture and trouble in vain,—for it never  
could save us a life.  
Valour of delicate women who tended the  
hospital bed,  
Horror of women in travail among the  
dying and dead,  
Grief for our perishing children, and never  
a moment for grief,

## THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW

Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering  
 hopes of relief,  
 Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd  
 for all that we knew—  
 Then day and night, day and night, coming  
 down on the still-shatter'd walls  
 Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands  
 of cannon-balls—  
 But ever upon the topmost roof our banner  
 of England blew.

### VII

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what  
 was told by the scout,  
 Outram and Havelock breaking their way  
 through the fell mutineers?  
 Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing  
 again in our ears!  
 All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant  
 shout,  
 Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer  
 with conquering cheers,  
 Sick from the hospital echo them, women  
 and children come out,  
 Blessing the wholesome white faces of  
 Havelock's good fusileers,  
 Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the  
 Highlander wet with their tears!  
 Dance to the pibroch!—saved! we are  
 saved!—is it you? is it you?  
 Saved by the valour of Havelock, saved by  
 the blessing of Heaven!  
 'Hold it for fifteen days!' we have held it  
 for eighty-seven!  
 And ever aloft on the palace roof the old  
 banner of England blew.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE,  
 LORD COBHAM

(IN WALES)

My friend should meet me somewhere  
 herabout  
 To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one,  
 I trow—  
 I read no more the prisoner's mute wail  
 Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;  
 I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or  
 none,

For I am emptier than a friar's brains;  
 But God is with me in this wilderness,  
 These wet black passes and foam-churning  
 chasms—

And God's free air, and hope of better  
 things.

I would I knew their speech; not now  
 to glean,  
 Not now—I hope to do it—some scatter'd  
 ears,

Some ears for Christ in this wild field of  
 Wales—

But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue  
 that wagg'd

They said with such heretical arrogance  
 Against the proud archbishop Arundel—  
 So much God's cause was fluent in it—is  
 here

But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;  
 'Bara!'—what use? The Shepherd, when  
 I speak,

Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard  
 'Dim Saesneg' passes, wroth at things of  
 old—

No fault of mine. Had he God's word in  
 Welsh

He might be kindlier: happily come the  
 day!

Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem  
 In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;  
 Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,  
 Least, for in thee the word was born again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living word,  
 Who whilome spakest to the South in Greek  
 About the soft Mediterranean shores,  
 And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,  
 As good need was—thou hast come to talk  
 our isle.

Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,  
 Must learn to use the tongues of all the  
 world.

Yet art thou thine own witness that thou  
 bringest

Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,  
 My frightened Wiclif-preacher whom I crost  
 In flying hither? that one night a crowd  
 Throng'd the waste field about the city  
 gates:

## SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM

The king was on them suddenly with a host.

Why there? they came to hear their preacher. Then

Some cried on Cobham, on the good Lord Cobham;

Ay, for they love me! but the king—nor voice

Nor finger raised against him—took and hang'd,

Took, hang'd and burnt—how many—thirty-nine—

Call'd it rebellion—hang'd, poor friends, as rebels

And burn'd alive as heretics! for your Priest

Labels—to take the king along with him—All heresy, treason: but to call men traitors

May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,

Red in thy birth, redder with household war,

Now reddest with the blood of holy men, Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster—

If somewhere in the North, as Rumour sang

Fluttering the hawks of this crown-lusting line—

By firth and loch thy silver sister grow,<sup>1</sup> That were my rose, there my allegiance due.

Self-starved, they say—nay, murder'd, doubtless dead.

So to this king I cleaved: my friend was he, Once my fast friend: I would have given my life

To help his own from scathe, a thousand lives

To save his soul. He might have come to learn

Our Wiclif's learning: but the worldly Priests

Who fear the king's hard common-sense should find

What rotten piles uphold their mason-work,

Urge him to foreign war. O had he will'd I might have stricken a lusty stroke for him,

But he would not; far liever led my friend

Back to the pure and universal church, But he would not: whether that heirless flaw

In his throne's title make him feel so frail, He leans on Antichrist; or that his mind,

So quick, so capable in soldiership, In matters of the faith, alas the while!

More worth than all the kingdoms of this world,

Runs in the rut, a coward to the Priest.

Burnt—good Sir Roger Acton, my dear friend!

Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Beverley! Lord give thou power to thy two witnesses!

Lest the false faith make merry over them! Two—nay but thirty-nine have risen and

stand, Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice, Before thy light, and cry continually—

Cry—against whom?

Him, who should bear the sword Of Justice—what! the kingly, kindly boy;

Who took the world so easily heretofore, My boon companion, tavern-fellow—him

Who gibed and japed—in many a merry tale That shook our sides—at Pardoners, Sum-

moners, Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries

And nunneries, when the wild hour and the wine

Had set the wits aflame.

Harry of Monmouth,

Or Amurath of the East?

Better to sink

Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling

Thy royalty back into the riotous fits Of wine and harlotry—thy shame, and

mine, Thy comrade—than to persecute the Lord,

And play the Saul that never will be Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred Arundel

Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the flame,

The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his clerks

<sup>1</sup> Richard II.

## SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM

Into the suburb—their hard celibacy,  
Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness, molten  
Into adulterous living, or such crimes  
As holy Paul—a shame to speak of them—  
Among the heathen—

Sanctuary granted  
To bandit, thief, assassin—yea to him  
Who hacks his mother's throat—denied to  
him,  
Who finds the Saviour in his mother  
tongue.

The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung down  
to swine—

The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who will  
come,

God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar.

Ah rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel,  
meant

To course and range thro' all the world,  
should be

Tether'd to these dead pillars of the  
Church—

Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,  
Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart,  
and life

Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how long,  
O Lord, how long!

My friend should meet me here,  
Here is the copse, the fountain and—a  
Cross!

To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor  
knees.

Rather to thee, green bosage, work of  
God,

Black holly, and white-flower'd wayfaring-  
tree!

Rather to thee, thou living water, drawn  
By this good Wiclif mountain down from  
heaven,

And speaking clearly in thy native tongue—  
No Latin—He that thirsteth, come and  
drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking me  
To worship Holy Cross! I spread mine  
arms,

God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and  
blood

And holier. That was heresy. (My good  
friend

By this time should be with me.) 'Images?'

'Bury them as God's truer images  
Are daily buried.' 'Heresy.—Penance?'

'Fast,  
Hairshirt and scourge—nay, let a man  
repent,

Do penance in his heart, God hears him.'  
'Heresy—

Not shriven, not saved?' 'What profits an  
ill Priest

Between me and my God? I would not  
spurn

Good counsel of good friends, but shrive  
myself

No, not to an Apostle.' 'Heresy.'  
(My friend is long in coming.) 'Pil-  
grimages?'

'Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-dances,  
vice.

The poor man's money gone to fat the  
friar.

Who reads of begging saints in Scripture?'  
—'Heresy'—

(Hath he been here—not found me—gone  
again?

Have I mislearnt our place of meeting?)  
'Bread—

Bread left after the blessing?' how they  
starved,

That was their main test-question—glared  
at me!

'He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now He  
veils

His flesh in bread, body and bread to-  
gether.'

Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd  
wolves,

'No bread, no bread. God's body!' Arch-  
bishop, Bishop,

Priors, Canons, Friars, bellringers, Parish-  
clerks—

'No bread, no bread!'—'Authority of the  
Church,

Power of the keys!'—Then I, God help  
me, I

So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two whole  
days—

I lost myself and fell from evenness,  
And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever since  
Sylvester shed the venom of world-wealth  
Into the church, had only prov'n them-  
selves

## SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM

Poisoners, murderers. Well—God pardon all—

Me, them, and all the world—yea, that proud Priest,

That mock-meek mouth of utter Antichrist,

That traitor to King Richard and the truth,  
Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.

Amen!

Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life  
Be by me in my death.

Those three! the fourth  
Was like the Son of God! Not burnt were they.

On *them* the smell of burning had not past.  
That was a miracle to convert the king.  
These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel  
What miracle could turn? *He* here again,  
*He* thwarting their traditions of Himself,  
*He* would be found a heretic to Himself,  
And doom'd to burn alive.

So, caught, I burn.  
Burn? heathen men have borne as much  
as this,

For freedom, or the sake of those they  
loved,

Or some less cause, some cause far less  
than mine;

For every other cause is less than mine.  
The moth will singe her wings, and singed  
return,

Her love of light quenching her fear of  
pain—

How now, my soul, we do not heed the  
fire?

Faint-hearted? tut!—faint-stomach'd!  
faint as I am,

God willing, I will burn for Him.

Who comes?  
A thousand marks are set upon my head.

Friend?—foe perhaps—a tussle for it then!  
Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well  
disguised,

I knew thee not. Hast thou brought bread  
with thee?

I have not broken bread for fifty hours.  
None? I am damn'd already by the Priest

For holding there was bread where bread  
was none—

No bread. My friends await me yonder?  
Yes.

Lead on then. *Up* the mountain? Is it far?  
Not far. Climb first and reach me down  
thy hand.

I am not like to die for lack of bread,  
For I must live to testify by fire.<sup>1</sup>

## COLUMBUS

CHAINS, my good lord: in your raised  
brows I read

Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.  
We brought this iron from our isles of gold.

Does the king know you deign to visit  
him

Whom once he rose from off his throne to  
greet

Before his people, like his brother king?  
I saw your face that morning in the crowd.

At Barcelona—tho' you were not then  
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd herself  
'To meet me, roar'd my name; the king,  
the queen

Bad me be seated, speak, and tell them all  
The story of my voyage, and while I spoke  
The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace, be  
still!'

And when I ceased to speak, the king, the  
queen,

Sank from their thrones, and melted into  
tears,

And knelt, and lifted hand and heart and  
voice

In praise to God who led me thro' the  
waste.

And then the great 'Laudamus' rose to  
heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean!  
chains

For him who gave a new heaven, a new  
earth,

As holy John had prophesied of me,  
Gave glory and more empire to the kings  
Of Spain than all their battles! chains for  
him

Who push'd his prow into the setting sun,  
And made West East, and sail'd the  
Dragon's mouth,

<sup>1</sup> He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

## COLUMBUS

And came upon the Mountain of the  
World,  
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the Ocean,  
we,  
We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand  
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic  
queen—  
Of the Ocean—of the Indies—Admirals  
we—  
Our title, which we never mean to yield,  
Our guerdon not alone for what we did,  
But our amends for all we might have  
done—  
The vast occasion of our stronger life—  
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in your  
Spain,  
Lost, showing courts and kings a truth the  
babe  
Will suck in with his milk hereafter—  
earth  
A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca? No.  
We fronted there the learning of all Spain,  
All their cosmogonies, their astronomies:  
Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the golden  
guess  
Is morning-star to the full round of truth.  
No guess-work! I was certain of my goal;  
Some thought it heresy, but that would not  
hold.  
King David call'd the heavens a hide, a  
tent  
Spread over earth, and so this earth was  
flat:  
Some cited old Lactantius: could it be  
That trees grew downward, rain fell up-  
ward, men  
Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and besides,  
The great Augustine wrote that none  
could breathe  
Within the zone of heat; so might there be  
Two Adams, two mankind, and that was  
clean  
Against God's word: thus was I beaten  
back,  
And chiefly to my sorrow by the Church,  
And thought to turn my face from Spain,  
appeal

Once more to France or England; but our  
Queen  
Recall'd me, for at last their Highnesses  
Were half-assured this earth might be a  
sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,  
All glory to the mother of our Lord,  
And Holy Church, from whom I never  
swerved  
Not even by one hair's-breadth of heresy,  
I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet—not all—last night a dream—  
I sail'd  
On my first voyage, harass'd by the frights  
Of my first crew, their curses and their  
groans.  
The great flame-banner borne by Teneriffe,  
The compass, like an old friend false at  
last  
In our most need, appall'd them, and the  
wind  
Still westward, and the weedy seas—at  
length  
The landbird, and the branch with berries  
on it,  
The carven staff—and last the light, the  
light  
On Guanahani! but I changed the name;  
San Salvador I call'd it; and the light  
Grew as I gazed, and brought out a broad  
sky  
Of dawning over—not those alien palms,  
The marvel of that fair new nature—not  
That Indian isle, but our most ancient  
East  
Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw  
The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat  
Thro' all the homely town from jasper,  
sapphire,  
Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius,  
Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,  
Jacynth, and amethyst—and those twelve  
gates,  
Pearl—and I woke, and thought—death—  
I shall die—  
I am written in the Lamb's own Book of  
Life  
To walk within the glory of the Lord  
Sunless and moonless, utter light—but no!

## COLUMBUS

The Lord had sent this bright, strange  
dream to me

To mind me of the secret vow I made  
When Spain was waging war against the  
Moor—

I strove myself with Spain against the  
Moor.

There came two voices from the Sepulchre,  
Two friars crying that if Spain should oust  
The Moslem from her limit, he, the fierce  
Soldan of Egypt, would break down and  
raze

The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon I  
vow'd

That, if our Princes harken'd to my prayer,  
Whatever wealth I brought from that new  
world

Should, in this old, be consecrate to lead  
A new crusade against the Saracen,  
And free the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Gold? I had brought your Princes gold  
enough

If left alone! Being but a Genovese,  
I am handled worse than had I been a  
Moor,

And breach'd the belting wall of Cambalu,  
And given the Great Khan's palaces to the  
Moor,

Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Prester  
John,

And cast it to the Moor: but *had* I brought  
From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir all  
The gold that Solomon's navies carried  
home,

Would that have gilded *me*? Blue blood of  
Spain,

Tho' quartering your own royal arms of  
Spain,

I have not: blue blood and black blood of  
Spain,

The noble and the convict of Castile,  
How!d me from Hispaniola; for you know  
The flies at home, that ever swarm about  
And cloud the highest heads, and murmur  
down

Truth in the distance—these outbuzz'd  
me so

That even our prudent king, our righteous  
queen—

I pray'd them being so calumniated

They would commission one of weight and  
worth

To judge between my slander'd self and  
me—

Fonseca my main enemy at their court,  
They sent me out *his* tool, Bovadilla, one  
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast—

Blockish irreverence, brainless greed—  
who sack'd

My dwelling, seized upon my papers,  
loosed

My captives, feed the rebels of the crown,  
Sold the crown-farms for all but nothing,  
gave

All but free leave for all to work the mines,  
Drove me and my good brothers home in  
chains,

And gathering ruthless gold—a single piece  
Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castellanos  
—so

They tell me—weigh'd him down into the  
abysm—

The hurricane of the latitude on him fell,  
The seas of our discovering over-roll  
Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,  
With what was mine, came happily to the  
shore.

*There* was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God

Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O my  
lord,

I swear to you I heard his voice between  
The thunders in the black Veragua nights,  
'O soul of little faith, slow to believe!

Have I not been about thee from thy  
birth?

Given thee the keys of the great Ocean-  
sea?

Set thee in light till time shall be no more?  
Is it I who have deceived thee or the world?

Endure! thou hast done so well for men,  
that men

Cry out against thee: was it otherwise  
With mine own Son?

And more than once in days  
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when  
drowning hope

Sank all but out of sight, I heard his voice,  
'Be not cast down. I lead thee by the hand,



## COLUMBUS

Fear not.' And I shall hear his voice  
again—

I know that he has led me all my life,  
I am not yet too old to work his will—  
His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,  
I lying here bedridden and alone,  
Cast off, put by, scouted by court and  
king—

The first discoverer starves—his followers,  
all

Flower into fortune—our world's way—  
and I,

Without a roof that I can call mine own,  
With scarce a coin to buy a meal withal,  
And seeing what a door for scoundrel  
scum

I open'd to the West, thro' which the lust,  
Villany, violence, avarice, of your Spain  
Pour'd in on all those happy naked isles—  
Their kindly native princes slain or slaved,  
Their wives and children Spanish concu-  
bines,

Their innocent hospitalities quench'd in  
blood,

Some dead of hunger, some beneath the  
scourge,

Some over-labour'd, some by their own  
hands,—

Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature,  
kill

Their babies at the breast for hate of  
Spain—

Ah God, the harmless people whom we  
found

In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!

Who took us for the very Gods from  
Heaven,

And we have sent them very fiends from  
Hell;

And I myself, myself not blameless, I  
Could sometimes wish I had never led the  
way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic  
Queen

Smiles on me, saying, 'Be thou comforted!  
This creedless people will be brought to  
Christ

And own the holy governance of Rome.'

But who could dream that we, who bore  
the Cross

Thither, were excommunicated there,  
For curbing crimes that scandalised the  
Cross,

By him, the Catalanian Minorite,  
Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who believe  
These hard memorials of our truth to  
Spain

Clung closer to us for a longer term  
Than any friend of ours at Court? and yet  
Pardon—too harsh, unjust. I am rack'd  
with pains.

You see that I have hung them by my  
bed,  
And I will have them buried in my grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are God's  
Own voice to justify the dead—perchance  
Spain once the most chivalric race on earth,  
Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest realm  
on earth,

So made by me, may seek to unbury me,  
To lay me in some shrine of this old Spain,  
Or in that vaster Spain I leave to Spain.  
Then some one standing by my grave will  
say,

'Behold the bones of Christopher Colòn'—  
'Ay, but the chains, what do *they* mean—  
the chains?'—

I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain  
Who then will have to answer, 'These same  
chains

Bound these same bones back thro' the  
Atlantic sea,

Which he unchain'd for all the world to  
come.'

O Queen of Heaven who seest the souls  
in Hell

And purgatory, I suffer all as much  
As they do—for the moment. Stay, my son  
Is here anon: my son will speak for me  
Ablier than I can in these spasms that grind  
Bone against bone. You will not. One last  
word.

You move about the Court, I pray you  
tell

King Ferdinand who plays with me, that  
one,

## COLUMBUS

Whose life has been no play with him and  
his

Hidalgos—shipwrecks, famines, fevers,  
fights,

Mutinies, treacheries—wink'd at, and con-  
doned—

That I am loyal to him till the death,  
And ready—tho' our Holy Catholic Queen,  
Who fain had pledged her jewels on my  
first voyage,

Whose hope was mine to spread the  
Catholic faith,

Who wept with me when I return'd in  
chains,

Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,  
To whom I send my prayer by night and  
day—

She is gone—but you will tell the King,  
that I,

Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd  
with pains

Gain'd in the service of His Highness, yet  
Am ready to sail forth on one last voyage,  
And readier, if the King would hear, to  
lead

One last crusade against the Saracen,  
And save the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted: you have  
dared

Somewhat perhaps in coming? my poor  
thanks!

I am but an alien and a Genovese.

### THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND.

A.D. 700)

#### I

I WAS the chief of the race—he had stricken  
my father dead—

But I gather'd my fellows together, I swore  
I would strike off his head.

Each of them look'd like a king, and was  
noble in birth as in worth,

And each of them boasted he sprang from  
the oldest race upon earth.

Each was as brave in the fight as the bravest  
hero of song,

And each of them liefer had died than  
have done one another a wrong.

He lived on an isle in the ocean—we sail'd,  
on a Friday morn—

He that had slain my father the day before  
I was born.

#### II

And we came to the isle in the ocean, and  
there on the shore was he.

But a sudden blast blew us out and away  
thro' a boundless sea.

#### III

And we came to the Silent Isle that we  
never had touch'd at before,

Where a silent ocean always broke on a  
silent shore,

And the brooks glitter'd on in the light  
without sound, and the long waterfalls

Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base  
of the mountain walls,

And the poplar and cypress unshaken by  
storm flourish'd up beyond sight,

And the pine shot aloft from the crag to an  
unbelievable height,

And high in the heaven above it there  
flicker'd a songless lark,

And the cock couldn't crow, and the bull  
couldn't low, and the dog couldn't  
bark.

And round it we went, and thro' it, but  
never a murmur, a breath—

It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it  
quiet as death,

And we hated the beautiful Isle, for when-  
ever we strove to speak

Our voices were thinner and fainter than  
any flittermouse-shriek;

And the men that were mighty of tongue  
and could raise such a battle-cry

That a hundred who heard it would rush  
on a thousand lances and die—

O they to be dumb'd by the charm!—so  
fluster'd with anger were they

They almost fell on each other; but after  
we sail'd away.

#### IV

And we came to the Isle of Shouting, we  
landed, a score of wild birds

Cried from the topmost summit with  
human voices and words;

## THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE

Once in an hour they cried, and whenever  
 their voices peal'd  
 The steer fell down at the plow and the  
 harvest died from the field,  
 And the men dropt dead in the valleys and  
 half of the cattle went lame,  
 And the roof sank in on the hearth, and  
 the dwelling broke into flame;  
 And the shouting of these wild birds ran  
 into the hearts of my crew,  
 Till they shouted along with the shouting  
 and seized one another and slew;  
 But I drew them the one from the other;  
 I saw that we could not stay,  
 And we left the dead to the birds and we  
 sail'd with our wounded away.

### V

And we came to the Isle of Flowers: their  
 breath met us out on the seas,  
 For the Spring and the middle Summer  
 sat each on the lap of the breeze;  
 And the red passion-flower to the cliffs,  
 and the dark-blue clematis, clung,  
 And starr'd with a myriad blossom the long  
 convolvulus hung;  
 And the topmost spire of the mountain was  
 lilies in lieu of snow,  
 And the lilies like glaciers winded down,  
 running out below  
 Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy, the  
 blaze of gorse, and the blush  
 Of millions of roses that sprang without  
 leaf or a thorn from the bush;  
 And the whole isle-side flashing down  
 from the peak without ever a tree  
 Swept like a torrent of gems from the sky  
 to the blue of the sea;  
 And we roll'd upon capes of crocus and  
 vaunted our kith and our kin,  
 And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and  
 chanted the triumph of Finn,  
 Till each like a golden image was pollen'd  
 from head to feet  
 And each was as dry as a cricket, with thirst  
 in the middle-day heat.  
 Blossom and blossom, and promise of  
 blossom, but never a fruit!  
 And we hated the Flowering Isle, as we  
 hated the isle that was mute,

And we tore up the flowers by the million  
 and flung them in bight and bay,  
 And we left but a naked rock, and in anger  
 we sail'd away.

### VI

And we came to the Isle of Fruits: all  
 round from the cliffs and the capes,  
 Purple or amber, dangled a hundred  
 fathom of grapes,  
 And the warm melon lay like a little sun on  
 the tawny sand,  
 And the fig ran up from the beach and  
 rioted over the land,  
 And the mountain arose like a jewell'd  
 throne thro' the fragrant air,  
 Glowing with all-colour'd plums and with  
 golden masses of pear,  
 And crimson and scarlet of berries that  
 flamed upon bine and vine,  
 But in every berry and fruit was the  
 poisonous pleasure of wine;  
 And the peak of the mountain was apples,  
 the hugest that ever were seen,  
 And they prest, as they grew, on each  
 other, with hardly a leaflet between,  
 And all of them redder than rosiest health  
 or than utterest shame,  
 And setting, when Even descended, the  
 very sunset aflame;  
 And we stay'd three days, and we gorged  
 and we madden'd, till every one drew  
 His sword on his fellow to slay him, and  
 ever they struck and they slew;  
 And myself, I had eaten but sparingly, and  
 fought till I sunder'd the fray,  
 Then I bad them remember my father's  
 death, and we sail'd away.

### VII

And we came to the Isle of Fire: we were  
 lured by the light from afar,  
 For the peak sent up one league of fire to  
 the Northern Star;  
 Lured by the glare and the blare, but  
 scarcely could stand upright,  
 For the whole isle shudder'd and shook  
 like a man in a mortal affright;  
 We were giddy besides with the fruits we  
 had gorged, and so crazed that at last

## THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE

There were some leap'd into the fire; and  
 away we sail'd, and we past  
 Over that undersea isle, where the water is  
 clearer than air:  
 Down we look'd: what a garden! O bliss,  
 what a Paradise there!  
 Towers of a happier time, low down in a  
 rainbow deep  
 Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal sleep!  
 And three of the gentlest and best of my  
 people, whate'er I could say,  
 Plunged head down in the sea, and the  
 Paradise trembled away.

### VIII

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where  
 the heavens lean low on the land,  
 And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd  
 o'er us a sunbright hand,  
 Then it open'd and dropt at the side of  
 each man, as he rose from his rest,  
 Bread enough for his need till the labour-  
 less day dipt under the West;  
 And we wander'd about it and thro' it. O  
 never was time so good!  
 And we sang of the triumphs of Finn, and  
 the boast of our ancient blood,  
 And we gazed at the wandering wave as  
 we sat by the gurgle of springs,  
 And we chanted the songs of the Bards  
 and the glories of fairy kings;  
 But at length we began to be weary, to  
 sigh, and to stretch and yawn,  
 Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the  
 sunbright hand of the dawn,  
 For there was not an enemy near, but the  
 whole green Isle was our own,  
 And we took to playing at ball, and we  
 took to throwing the stone,  
 And we took to playing at battle, but that  
 was a perilous play,  
 For the passion of battle was in us, we  
 slew and we sail'd away.

### IX

And we past to the Isle of Witches and  
 heard their musical cry—  
 'Come to us, O come, come' in the stormy  
 red of a sky  
 Dashing the fires and the shadows of dawn  
 on the beautiful shapes,

For a wild witch naked as heaven stood on  
 each of the loftiest capes,  
 And a hundred ranged on the rock like  
 white sea-birds in a row,  
 And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced on  
 the wrecks in the sand below,  
 And a hundred splash'd from the ledges,  
 and bosom'd the burst of the spray,  
 But I knew we should fall on each other,  
 and hastily sail'd away.

### X

And we came in an evil time to the Isle of  
 the Double Towers,  
 One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved  
 all over with flowers,  
 But an earthquake always moved in the  
 hollows under the dells,  
 And they shock'd on each other and butted  
 each other with clashing of bells,  
 And the daws flew out of the Towers and  
 jangled and wrangled in vain,  
 And the clash and boom of the bells rang  
 into the heart and the brain,  
 Till the passion of battle was on us, and  
 all took sides with the Towers,  
 There were some for the clean-cut stone,  
 there were more for the carven flowers,  
 And the wrathful thunder of God peal'd  
 over us all the day,  
 For the one half slew the other, and after  
 we sail'd away.

### XI

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who  
 had sail'd with St. Brendan of yore,  
 He had lived ever since on the Isle and his  
 winters were fifteen score,  
 And his voice was low as from other worlds,  
 and his eyes were sweet,  
 And his white hair sank to his heels and  
 his white beard fell to his feet,  
 And he spake to me, 'O Maeldune, let be  
 this purpose of thine!  
 Remember the words of the Lord when  
 he told us "Vengeance is mine!"  
 His fathers have slain thy fathers in war or  
 in single strife,  
 Thy fathers have slain his fathers, each  
 taken a life for a life,

## THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE

Thy father had slain his father, how long  
shall the murder last?  
Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer the  
Past to be Past.  
And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard and  
we pray'd as we heard him pray,  
And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and sadly  
we sail'd away.

### XII

And we came to the Isle we were blown  
from, and there on the shore was he,  
The man that had slain my father. I saw  
him and let him be.  
O weary was I of the travel, the trouble,  
the strife and the sin,  
When I landed again, with a tithe of my  
men, on the Isle of Finn.

### DE PROFUNDIS

#### THE TWO GREETINGS

TO H. T. AUGUST 11, 1852

#### I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
Where all that was to be, in all that was,  
Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast  
Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy  
light—  
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
Thro' all this changing world of changeless  
law,  
And every phase of ever-heightening life,  
And nine long months of antenatal gloom,  
With this last moon, this crescent—her  
dark orb  
Touch'd with earth's light—thou comest,  
darling boy;  
Our own; a babe in lineament and limb  
Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man;  
Whose face and form are hers and mine  
in one,  
Indissolubly married like our love;  
Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve  
This mortal race thy kin so well, that men  
May bless thee as we bless thee, O young  
life  
Breaking with laughter from the dark; and  
may  
The fated channel where thy motion lives

Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy  
course  
Along the years of haste and random youth  
Unshatter'd; then full-current thro' full  
man;  
And last in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,  
By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,  
To that last deep where we and thou are  
still.

#### II

##### I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
From that great deep, before our world  
begins,  
Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he  
will—  
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
From that true world within the world we  
see,  
Whereof our world is but the bounding  
shore—  
Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,  
With this ninth moon, that sends the  
hidden sun  
Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling  
boy.

##### II

For in the world, which is not ours, They  
said  
'Let us make man' and that which should  
be man,  
From that one light no man can look upon,  
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and  
moons  
And all the shadows. O dear Spirit half-lost  
In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign  
That thou art thou—who wailst being  
born  
And banish'd into mystery, and the pain  
Of this divisible-indivisible world  
Among the numerable-innumerable  
Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite  
space  
In finite-infinite Time—our mortal veil  
And shatter'd phantom of that infinite One,  
Who made thee unconceivably Thyself  
Out of His whole World—self and all in all—  
Live thou! and of the grain and husk, the  
grape

## DE PROFUNDIS

And ivyberry, choose; and still depart  
From death to death thro' life and life, and  
find

Nearer and ever nearer Him, who wrought  
Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,  
But this main-miracle, that thou art thou,  
With power on thine own act and on the  
world.

### THE HUMAN CRY

#### I

HALLOWED be Thy name—Halleluiah!—  
Infinite Ideality!  
Immeasurable Reality!  
Infinite Personality!  
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

#### II

We feel we are nothing—for all is Thou  
and in Thee;  
We feel we are something—that also has  
come from Thee;  
We know we are nothing—but Thou wilt  
help us to be.  
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

### PREFATORY SONNET

#### TO THE 'NINETEENTH CENTURY'

THOSE that of late had fleeted far and fast  
To touch all shores, now leaving to the  
skill  
Of others their old craft seaworthy still,  
Have charter'd this; where, mindful of the  
past,  
Our true co-mates regather round the  
mast;  
Of diverse tongue, but with a common will  
Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil  
And crocus, to put forth and brave the  
blast;  
For some, descending from the sacred  
peak  
Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued  
again  
Their lot with ours to rove the world about;  
And some are wilder comrades, sworn to  
seek  
If any golden harbour be for men  
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of  
Doubt.

### TO THE

#### REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that knew  
you best,  
Old Brooks, who loved so well to mouth  
my rhymes,  
How oft we two have heard St. Mary's  
chimes!  
How oft the Cantab supper, host and guest,  
Would echo helpless laughter to your jest!  
How oft with him we paced that walk of  
limes,  
Him, the lost light of those dawn-golden  
times,  
Who loved you well! Now both are gone  
to rest.  
You man of humorous-melancholy mark,  
Dead of some inward agony—is it so?  
Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past away!  
I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark:  
*Σκιᾶς ὄναρ*—dream of a shadow, go—  
God bless you. I shall join you in a day.

### MONTENEGRO

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle sails,  
They kept their faith, their freedom, on  
the height,  
Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and  
night  
Against the Turk; whose inroad nowhere  
scales  
Their headlong passes, but his footstep  
fails,  
And red with blood the Crescent reels  
from fight  
Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone  
flight  
By thousands down the crags and thro' the  
vales.  
O smallest among peoples! rough rock-  
throne  
Of Freedom! warriors beating back the  
swarm  
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,  
Great Tsernogora! never since thine own  
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the  
storm  
Has breathed a race of mightier moun-  
taineers.

## TO VICTOR HUGO

### TO VICTOR HUGO

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,  
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and  
fears,  
French of the French, and Lord of human  
tears;  
Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit laurels  
glance  
Darkening the wreaths of all that would  
advance,

Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy  
peers;  
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of years  
As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of France!  
Who dost not love our England—so they  
say;  
I know not—England, France, all man to be  
Will make one people ere man's race be  
run:  
And I, desiring that diviner day,  
Yield thee full thanks for thy full courtesies  
To younger England in the boy my son.

## TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

### BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

Constantinus, King of the Scots, after having  
sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself  
with the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and  
invading England, was defeated by Athelstan  
and his brother Edmund with great slaughter  
at Brunanburh in the year 937.

#### I

'ATHELSTAN King,  
Lord among Earls,  
Bracelet-bestower and  
Baron of Barons,  
He with his brother,  
Edmund Atheling,  
Gaining a lifelong  
Glory in battle,  
Slew with the sword-edge  
There by Brunanburh,  
Brake the shield-wall,  
Hew'd the lindenwood,<sup>1</sup>  
Hack'd the battleshield,

Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

#### II

Theirs was a greatness  
Got from their Grandsires—  
Theirs that so often in  
Strife with their enemies  
Struck for their hoards and their hearths  
and their homes.

<sup>1</sup> I have more or less availed myself of my  
son's prose translation of this poem in the *Con-  
temporary Review* (November 1876).

<sup>2</sup> Shields of lindenwood.

#### III

Bow'd the spoiler,  
Bent the Scotsman,  
Fell the shipcrews  
Doom'd to the death.  
All the field with blood of the fighters  
Flow'd, from when first the great  
Sun-star of morningtide,  
Lamp of the Lord God  
Lord everlasting,  
Glode over earth till the glorious creature  
Sank to his setting.

#### IV

There lay many a man  
Marr'd by the javelin,  
Men of the Northland  
Shot over shield.  
There was the Scotsman  
Weary of war.

#### V

We the West-Saxons,  
Long as the daylight  
Lasted, in companies  
Troubled the track of the host that we  
hated,  
Grimly with swords that were sharp from  
the grindstone,  
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before us.

#### VI

Mighty the Mercian,  
Hard was his hand-play,

## BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

Sparing not any of  
Those that with Anlaf,  
Warriors over the  
Weltering waters  
Borne in the bark's-bosom,  
Drew to this island:  
Doom'd to the death.

### VII

Five young kings put asleep by the sword-  
stroke,  
Seven strong Earls of the army of Anlaf  
Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,  
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

### VIII

Then the Norse leader,  
Dire was his need of it,  
Few were his following,  
Fled to his warship:  
Flected his vessel to sea with the king in it,  
Saving his life on the fallow flood.

### IX

Also the crafty one,  
Constantinus,  
Crept to his North again,  
Hoar-headed hero!

### X

Slender warrant had  
*He* to be proud of  
The welcome of war-knives—  
He that was reft of his  
Folk and his friends that had  
Fallen in conflict,  
Leaving his son too  
Lost in the carnage,  
Mangled to morsels,  
A youngster in war!

### XI

Slender reason had  
*He* to be glad of  
The clash of the war-glaive—  
Traitor and trickster  
And spurner of treaties—  
He nor had Anlaf  
With armies so broken  
A reason for bragging  
That they had the better

In perils of battle  
On places of slaughter—  
The struggle of standards,  
The rush of the javelins,  
The crash of the charges,<sup>1</sup>  
The wielding of weapons—  
The play that they play'd with  
The children of Edward.

### XII

Then with their nail'd prow  
Parted the Norsemen, a  
Blood-redden'd relic of  
Javelins over  
The jarring breaker, the deep-sea  
billow,  
Shaping their way toward Dyflen<sup>2</sup>  
again,  
Shamed in their souls.

### XIII

Also the brethren,  
King and Atheling,  
Each in his glory,  
Went to his own in his own West-Saxon-  
land,  
Glad of the war.

### XIV

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,  
Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin—  
Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear it, and  
Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to rend it,  
and  
Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to gorge  
it, and  
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

### XV

Never had huger  
Slaughter of heroes  
Slain by the sword-edge—  
Such as old writers  
Have writ of in histories—  
Hapt in this isle, since  
Up from the East hither  
Saxon and Angle from  
Over the broad billow  
Broke into Britain with  
Haughty war-workers who

<sup>1</sup> Lit. 'the gathering of men.'    <sup>2</sup> Dublin.



## BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

Harried the Welshman, when  
Earls that were lured by the  
Hunger of glory gat  
Hold of the land.

### ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH

*Iliad*, xviii. 252

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.  
Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus; and round  
The warrior's puissant shoulders Pallas  
flung

Her fringed ægis, and around his head  
The glorious goddess wreath'd a golden  
cloud,

And from it lighted an all-shining flame.  
As when a smoke from a city goes to  
heaven

Far off from out an island girt by foes,  
All day the men contend in grievous war  
From their own city, but with set of sun  
Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the glare  
Flies streaming, if perchance the neigh-  
bours round

May see, and sail to help them in the war;  
So from his head the splendour went to  
heaven.

From wall to dyke he stept, he stood, nor  
join'd

The Achæans—honouring his wise  
mother's word—

There standing, shouted, and Pallas far  
away

Call'd; and a boundless panic shook the  
foe.

For like the clear voice when a trumpet  
shrills,

Blown by the fierce beleaguers of a town,  
So rang the clear voice of Æakidês;  
And when the brazen cry of Æakidês  
Was heard among the Trojans, all their  
hearts

Were troubled, and the full-maned horses  
whirl'd

The chariots backward, knowing griefs at  
hand;

And sheer-astounded were the charioteers  
To see the dread, unweariable fire  
That always o'er the great Peleion's head  
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess made  
it burn.

Thrice from the dyke he sent his mighty  
shout,

Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans and  
allies;

And there and then twelve of their noblest  
died

Among their spears and chariots.

### TO PRINCESS FEDERICA ON HER MARRIAGE

O YOU that were eyes and light to the King  
till he past away

From the darkness of life—

He saw not his daughter—he blest her:

the blind King sees you to-day,

He blesses the wife.

### SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER  
ABBEY

NOT here! the white North has thy bones;  
and thou,

Heroic sailor-soul,

Art passing on thine happier voyage now  
Toward no earthly pole.

### TO DANTE

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE  
FLORENTINES)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred years,  
and grown

In power, and ever growest, since thine  
own

Fair Florence honouring thy nativity,  
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,

Hath sought the tribute of a verse from me,

I, wearing but the garland of a day,

Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away.

# TIRESIAS

## AND OTHER POEMS

TO MY GOOD FRIEND

ROBERT BROWNING

WHOSE GENIUS AND GENIALITY WILL BEST APPRECIATE WHAT MAY BE BEST  
AND MAKE MOST ALLOWANCE FOR WHAT MAY BE WORST  
THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

### TO E. FITZGERALD

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb grange,  
Where once I tarried for a while,  
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,  
And greet it with a kindly smile;  
Whom yet I see as there you sit  
Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,  
And while your doves about you flit,  
And plant on shoulder, hand and knee,  
Or on your head their rosy feet,  
As if they knew your diet spares  
Whatever moved in that full sheet  
Let down to Peter at his prayers;  
Who live on milk and meal and grass;  
And once for ten long weeks I tried  
Your table of Pythagoras,  
And seem'd at first 'a thing enskied'  
(As Shakespeare has it) airy-light  
To float above the ways of men,  
Then fell from that half-spiritual height  
Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again  
One night when earth was winter-black,  
And all the heavens flash'd in frost;  
And on me, half-asleep, came back  
That wholesome heat the blood had lost,  
And set me climbing icy capes  
And glaciers, over which there roll'd  
To meet me long-arm'd vines with grapes  
Of Eshcol hugeness; for the cold  
Without, and warmth within me, wrought  
To mould the dream; but none can say  
That Lenten fare makes Lenten thought,  
Who reads your golden Eastern lay,  
Than which I know no version done  
In English more divinely well;  
A planet equal to the sun  
Which cast it, that large infidel  
Your Omar; and your Omar drew  
Full-handed plaudits from our best

In modern letters, and from two,  
Old friends outvaluing all the rest,  
Two voices heard on earth no more;  
But we old friends are still alive,  
And I am nearing seventy-four,  
While you have touch'd at seventy-five,  
And so I send a birthday line  
Of greeting; and my son, who dipt  
In some forgotten book of mine  
With sallow scraps of manuscript,  
And dating many a year ago,  
Has hit on this, which you will take  
My Fitz, and welcome, as I know  
Less for its own than for the sake  
Of one recalling gracious times,  
When, in our younger London days,  
You found some merit in my rhymes,  
And I more pleasure in your praise.

### TIRESIAS

I WISH I were as in the years of old,  
While yet the blessed daylight made itself  
Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight, and  
woke  
These eyes, now dull, but then so keen to  
seek  
The meanings ambush'd under all they  
saw,  
The flight of birds, the flame of sacrifice,  
What omens may foreshadow fate to man  
And woman, and the secret of the Gods.  
My son, the Gods, despite of human  
prayer,  
Are slower to forgive than human kings.  
The great God, Arès, burns in anger still  
Against the guiltless heirs of him from  
Tyre,  
Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art, who  
found

## TIRESIAS

Beside the springs of Dircê, smote, and still'd

Thro' all its folds the multitudinous beast,  
The dragon, which our trembling fathers call'd

The God's own son.

A tale, that told to me,  
When but thine age, by age as winter-white

As mine is now, amazed, but made me yearn

For larger glimpses of that more than man  
Which rolls the heavens, and lifts, and lays the deep,

Yet loves and hates with mortal hates and loves,

And moves unseen among the ways of men.

Then, in my wanderings all the lands that lie

Subjected to the Heliconian ridge  
Have heard this footstep fall, altho' my wont

Was more to scale the highest of the heights

With some strange hope to see the nearer God.

One naked peak—the sister of the sun  
Would climb from out the dark, and linger there

To silver all the valleys with her shafts—  
There once, but long ago, five-fold thy term

Of years, I lay; the winds were dead for heat;

The noonday crag made the hand burn; and sick

For shadow—not one bush was near—I rose

Following a torrent till its myriad falls  
Found silence in the hollows underneath.

There in a secret olive-glade I saw  
Pallas Athene climbing from the bath  
In anger; yet one glittering foot disturb'd  
The lucid well; one snowy knee was prest  
Against the margin flowers; a dreadful light

Came from her golden hair, her golden helm

And all her golden armour on the grass,  
And from her virgin breast, and virgin eyes

Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew dark

For ever, and I heard a voice that said  
'Henceforth be blind, for thou hast seen too much,

And speak the truth that no man may believe.'

Son, in the hidden world of sight, that lives

Behind this darkness, I behold her still,  
Beyond all work of those who carve the stone,

Beyond all dreams of Godlike womanhood,

Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a glance,  
And as it were, perforce, upon me flash'd  
The power of prophesying—but to me  
No power—so chain'd and coupled with the curse

Of blindness and their unbelief, who heard  
And heard not, when I spake of famine, plague,

Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire, flood, thunderbolt,

And angers of the Gods for evil done  
And expiation lack'd—no power on Fate,  
Theirs, or mine own! for when the crowd would roar

For blood, for war, whose issue was their doom,

To cast wise words among the multitude  
Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in hours  
Of civil outbreak, when I knew the twain  
Would each waste each, and bring on both the yoke

Of stronger states, was mine the voice to curb

The madness of our cities and their kings.

Who ever turn'd upon his heel to hear  
My warning that the tyranny of one  
Was prelude to the tyranny of all?

My counsel that the tyranny of all  
Led backward to the tyranny of one?

This power hath work'd no good to aught that lives,

And these blind hands were useless in their wars.

O therefore that the unfulfill'd desire,  
The grief for ever born from griefs to be,  
The boundless yearning of the Prophet's heart—

## TIRESIAS

Could *that* stand forth, and like a statue,  
rear'd

To some great citizen, win all praise from  
all

Who past it, saying, 'That was he!'

In vain!

Virtue must shape itself in deed, and those  
Whom weakness or necessity have cramp'd  
Within themselves, immersing, each, his  
urn

In his own well, draw solace as he may.

Menœceus, thou hast eyes, and I can  
hear

Too plainly what full tides of onset sap  
Our seven high gates, and what a weight  
of war

Rides on those ringing axles! jingle of bits,  
Shouts, arrows, tramp of the hornfooted  
horse

That grind the glebe to powder! Stony  
showers

Of that ear-stunning hail of Arès crash  
Along the sounding walls. Above, below,  
Shock after shock, the song-built towers  
and gates

Reel, bruised and butted with the shudder-  
ing

War-thunder of iron rams; and from  
within

The city comes a murmur void of joy,  
Lest she be taken captive—maidens, wives,  
And mothers with their babblers of the  
dawn,

And oldest age in shadow from the night,  
Falling about their shrines before their  
Gods,

And wailing 'Save us.'

And they wait to thee!

These eyeless eyes, that cannot see thine  
own,

See this, that only in thy virtue lies

The saving of our Thebes; for, yester-  
night,

To me, the great God Arès, whose one  
bliss

Is war, and human sacrifice—himself

Blood-red from battle, spear and helmet  
tip

With stormy light as on a mast at sea,  
Stood out before a darkness, crying  
'Thebes,

Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I  
loathe

The seed of Cadmus—yet if one of these  
By his own hand—if one of these——'

My son,

No sound is breathed so potent to coerce,  
And to conciliate, as their names who dare  
For that sweet mother land which gave  
them birth

Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their names,  
Graven on memorial columns, are a song  
Heard in the future; few, but more than  
wall

And rampart, their examples reach a hand  
Far thro' all years, and everywhere they  
meet

And kindle generous purpose, and the  
strength

To mould it into action pure as theirs.

Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's best end  
Be to end well! and thou refusing this,  
Unvenerable will thy memory be  
While men shall move the lips: but if thou  
dare—

Thou, one of these, the race of Cadmus—  
then

No stone is fitted in yon marble girth  
Whose echo shall not tongue thy glorious  
doom,

Nor in this pavement but shall ring thy  
name

To every hoof that clangs it, and the  
springs

Of Dircè laving yonder battle-plain,  
Heard from the roofs by night, will mur-  
mur thee

To thine own Thebes, while Thebes thro'  
thee shall stand

Firm-based with all her Gods.

The Dragon's cave

Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing  
vines—

Where once he dwelt and whence he roll'd  
himself

At dead of night—thou knowest, and that  
smooth rock

Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of late  
The woman-breasted Sphinx, with wings  
drawn back,

Folded her lion paws, and look'd to  
Thebes.

## TIRESIAS

There blanch the bones of whom she slew,  
and these  
Mixt with her own, because the fierce  
beast found

A wiser than herself, and dash'd herself  
Dead in her rage: but thou art wise enough,  
Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt the  
curse

Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the truth  
Believe I speak it, let thine own hand strike  
Thy youthful pulses into rest and quench  
The red God's anger, fearing not to plunge  
Thy torch of life in darkness, rather—thou  
Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the stars  
Send no such light upon the ways of men  
As one great deed.

Thither, my son, and there  
Thou, that hast never known the embrace  
of love,  
Offer thy maiden life.

This useless hand!  
I felt one warm tear fall upon it. Gone!  
He will achieve his greatness.

But for me,  
I would that I were gather'd to my rest,  
And mingled with the famous kings of old,  
On whom about their ocean-islets flash  
The faces of the Gods—the wise man's  
word,

Here trampled by the populace underfoot,  
There crown'd with worship—and these  
eyes will find

The men I knew, and watch the chariot whirl  
About the goal again, and hunters race  
The shadowy lion, and the warrior-kings,  
In height and prowess more than human,  
strive

Again for glory, while the golden lyre  
Is ever sounding in heroic ears  
Heroic hymns, and every way the vales  
Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-  
fume

Of those who mix all odour to the Gods  
On one far height in one far-shining fire.

---

'One height and one far-shining fire'  
And while I fancied that my friend  
For this brief idyll would require  
A less diffuse and opulent end,  
And would defend his judgment well,

If I should deem it over nice—  
The tolling of his funeral bell  
Broke on my Pagan Paradise,  
And mixt the dream of classic times  
And all the phantoms of the dream,  
With present grief, and made the rhymes,  
That miss'd his living welcome, seem  
Like would-be guests an hour too late,  
Who down the highway moving on  
With easy laughter find the gate  
Is bolted, and the master gone.  
Gone into darkness, that full light  
Of friendship! past, in sleep, away  
By night, into the deeper night!  
The deeper night? A clearer day  
Than our poor twilight dawn on earth—  
If night, what barren toil to be!  
What life, so maim'd by night, were worth  
Our living out? Not mine to me  
Remembering all the golden hours  
Now silent, and so many dead,  
And him the last; and laying flowers,  
This wreath, above his honour'd head,  
And praying that, when I from hence  
Shall fade with him into the unknown,  
My close of earth's experience  
May prove as peaceful as his own.

## THE WRECK

I

HIDE me, Mother! my Fathers belong'd to  
the church of old,  
I am driven by storm and sin and death to  
the ancient fold,  
I cling to the Catholic Cross once more, to  
the Faith that saves,  
My brain is full of the crash of wrecks, and  
the roar of waves,  
My life itself is a wreck, I have sullied a  
noble name,  
I am flung from the rushing tide of the  
world as a waif of shame,  
I am roused by the wail of a child, and  
awake to a livid light,  
And a ghastlier face than ever has haunted  
a grave by night,  
I would hide from the storm without, I  
would flee from the storm within,  
I would make my life one prayer for a soul  
that died in his sin,

## THE WRECK

I was the tempter, Mother, and mine was  
the deeper fall;  
I will sit at your feet, I will hide my face,  
I will tell you all.

### II

He that they gave me to, Mother, a heed-  
less and innocent bride—  
I never have wrong'd his heart, I have only  
wounded his pride—

Spain in his blood and the Jew—dark-  
visaged, stately and tall—

A princelier-looking man never stept thro'  
a Prince's hall.

And who, when his anger was kindled,  
would venture to give him the nay?

And a man men fear is a man to be loved  
by the women they say.

And I could have loved him too, if the  
blossom can doat on the blight,

Or the young green leaf rejoice in the frost  
that sears it at night;

He would open the books that I prized,  
and toss them away with a yawn,

Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the which  
my nature was drawn,

The word of the Poet by whom the deeps  
of the world are stirr'd,

The music that robes it in language be-  
neath and beyond the word!

My Shelley would fall from my hands  
when he cast a contemptuous glance

From where he was poring over his Tables  
of Trade and Finance;

My hands, when I heard him coming  
would drop from the chords or the  
keys,

But ever I fail'd to please him, however I  
strove to please—

All day long far-off in the cloud of the city,  
and there

Lost, head and heart, in the chances of  
dividend, consol, and share—

And at home if I sought for a kindly caress,  
being woman and weak,

His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of snow  
on the cheek:

And so, when I bore him a girl, when I  
held it aloft in my joy,

He look'd at it coldly, and said to me 'Pity  
it isn't a boy.'

The one thing given me, to love and to  
live for, glanced at in scorn!

The child that I felt I could die for—as if  
she were basely born!

I had lived a wild-flower life, I was planted  
now in a tomb;

The daisy will shut to the shadow, I closed  
my heart to the gloom;

I threw myself all abroad—I would play  
my part with the young

By the low foot-lights of the world—and  
I caught the wreath that was flung.

### III

Mother, I have not—however their tongues  
may have babbled of me—

Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all but  
a dwarf was he,

And all but a hunchback too; and I look'd  
at him, first, askance,

With pity—not he the knight for an  
amorous girl's romance!

Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd in the  
light of a dowerless smile,

Having lands at home and abroad in a rich  
West-Indian isle;

But I came on him once at a ball, the heart  
of a listening crowd—

Why, what a brow was there! he was  
seated—speaking aloud

To women, the flower of the time, and  
men at the helm of state—

Flowing with easy greatness and touching  
on all things great,

Science, philosophy, song—till I felt my-  
self ready to weep

For I knew not what, when I heard that  
voice,—as mellow and deep

As a psalm by a mighty master and peal'd  
from an organ,—roll

Rising and falling—for, Mother, the voice  
was the voice of the soul;

And the sun of the soul made day in the  
dark of his wonderful eyes.

I here was the hand that would help me,  
would heal me—the heart that was  
wise!

And he, poor man, when he learnt that I  
hated the ring I wore,

He helpt me with death, and he heal'd me  
with sorrow for evermore.

## THE WRECK

### IV

For I broke the bond. That day my nurse  
 had brought me the child.  
 The small sweet face was flush'd, but it  
 coo'd to the Mother and smiled.  
 'Anything ailing,' I ask'd her, 'with baby?'  
 She shook her head,  
 And the Motherless Mother kiss'd it, and  
 turn'd in her haste and fled.

### V

Low warm winds had gently breathed us  
 away from the land—  
 Ten long sweet summer days upon deck,  
 sitting hand in hand—  
 When he clothed a naked mind with the  
 wisdom and wealth of his own,  
 And I bow'd myself down as a slave to his  
 intellectual throne,  
 When he coin'd into English gold some  
 treasure of classical song,  
 When he flouted a statesman's error, or  
 flamed at a public wrong,  
 When he rose as it were on the wings of an  
 eagle beyond me, and past  
 Over the range and the change of the world  
 from the first to the last,  
 When he spoke of his tropical home in the  
 canes by the purple tide,  
 And the high star-crowns of his palms on  
 the deep-wooded mountain-side,  
 And cliffs all robed in lianas that dropt to  
 the brink of his bay,  
 And trees like the towers of a minster, the  
 sons of a winterless day.  
 'Paradise there!' so he said, but I seem'd  
 in Paradise then  
 With the first great love I had felt for the  
 first and greatest of men;  
 Ten long days of summer and sin—if it  
 must be so—  
 But days of a larger light than I ever again  
 shall know—  
 Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro' life to  
 my latest breath;  
 'No frost there,' so he said, 'as in truest  
 Love no Death.'

### VI

Mother, one morning a bird with a warble  
 plaintively sweet

Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell  
 fluttering down at my feet;  
 I took it, he made it a cage, we fondled it,  
 Stephen and I,  
 But it died, and I thought of the child for  
 a moment, I scarce know why.

### VII

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as many  
 will say,  
 My sin to my desolate little one found me  
 at sea on a day,  
 When her orphan wail came borne in the  
 shriek of a growing wind,  
 And a voice rang out in the thunders of  
 Ocean and Heaven 'Thou hast sinn'd.'  
 And down in the cabin were we, for the  
 towering crest of the tides  
 Plunged on the vessel and swept in a  
 cataract off from her sides,  
 And ever the great storm grew with a howl  
 and a hoot of the blast  
 In the rigging, voices of hell—then came  
 the crash of the mast.  
 'The wages of sin is death,' and there I  
 began to weep,  
 'I am the Jonah, the crew should cast me  
 into the deep,  
 For ah God, what a heart was mine to  
 forsake her even for you.'  
 'Never the heart among women,' he said,  
 'more tender and true.'  
 'The heart! not a mother's heart, when I  
 left my darling alone.'  
 'Comfort yourself, for the heart of the  
 father will care for his own.'  
 'The heart of the father will spurn her,' I  
 cried, 'for the sin of the wife,  
 The cloud of the mother's shame will  
 enfold her and darken her life.'  
 Then his pale face twitch'd; 'O Stephen,  
 I love you, I love you, and yet—'  
 As I lean'd away from his arms—'would  
 God, we had never met!'  
 And he spoke not—only the storm; till  
 after a little, I yearn'd  
 For his voice again, and he call'd to me  
 'Kiss me!' and there—as I turn'd—  
 'The heart, the heart!' I kiss'd him, I clung  
 to the sinking form,

## THE WRECK

And the storm went roaring above us, and  
he—was out of the storm.

### VIII

And then, then, Mother, the ship stagger'd  
under a thunderous shock,  
That shook us asunder, as if she had struck  
and crash'd on a rock;  
For a huge sea smote every soul from the  
decks of The Falcon but one;  
All of them, all but the man that was lash'd  
to the helm had gone;  
And I fell—and the storm and the days  
went by, but I knew no more—  
Lost myself—lay like the dead by the dead  
on the cabin floor,  
Dead to the death beside me, and lost to  
the loss that was mine,  
With a dim dream, now and then, of a  
hand giving bread and wine,  
Till I woke from the trance, and the ship  
stood still, and the skies were blue,  
But the face I had known, O Mother, was  
not the face that I knew.

### IX

The strange misfeaturing mask that I saw  
so amazed me, that I  
Stumbled on deck, half mad. I would fling  
myself over and die!  
But one—he was waving a flag—the one  
man left on the wreck—  
'Woman'—he graspt at my arm—'stay  
there'—I crouch'd upon deck—  
'We are sinking, and yet there's hope:  
look yonder,' he cried, 'a sail'  
In a tone so rough that I broke into pas-  
sionate tears, and the wail  
Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat was  
nearing us—then  
All on a sudden I thought, I shall look on  
the child again.

### X

They lower'd me down the side, and there  
in the boat I lay  
With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-home, as  
we glided away,  
And I sigh'd, as the low dark hull dipt  
under the smiling main,  
'Had I stay'd with him. I had now—with  
him—been out of my pain.'

### XI

They took us aboard: the crew were gentle,  
the captain kind;  
But I was the lonely slave of an often-  
wandering mind;  
For whenever a rougher gust might tumble  
a stormier wave,  
'O Stephen,' I moan'd, 'I am coming to  
thee in thine Ocean-grave.'  
And again, when a balmier breeze curl'd  
over a peacefuller sea,  
I found myself moaning again 'O child, I  
am coming to thee.'

### XII

The broad white brow of the Isle—that  
bay with the colour'd sand—  
Rich was the rose of sunset there, as we  
drew to the land;  
All so quiet the ripple would hardly blanch  
into spray  
At the feet of the cliff; and I pray'd—'my  
child'—for I still could pray—  
May her life be as blissfully calm, be never  
gloom'd by the curse  
Of a sin, not hers!

Was it well with the child?

I wrote to the nurse  
Who had borne my flower on her hireling  
heart; and an answer came  
Not from the nurse—nor yet to the wife—  
to her maiden name!  
I shook as I open'd the letter—I knew that  
hand too well—  
And from it a scrap, clipt out of the  
'deaths' in a paper, fell.  
'Ten long sweet summer days' of fever,  
and want of care!  
And gone—that day of the storm—O  
Mother, she came to me there.

## DESPAIR

A man and his wife having lost faith in a God,  
and hope of a life to come, and being utterly  
miserable in this, resolve to end themselves by  
drowning. The woman is drowned, but the man  
rescued by a minister of the sect he had aban-  
doned.

### I

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel there  
looking over the sand?



## DESPAIR

Follow'd us too that night, and dogg'd us,  
and drew me to land?

### II

What did I feel that night? You are curious.  
How should I tell?

Does it matter so much what I felt? You  
rescued me—yet—was it well

That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd,  
between me and the deep and my  
doom,

Three days since, three more dark days of  
the Godless gloom

Of a life without sun, without health, with-  
out hope, without any delight

In anything here upon earth? but ah God,  
that night, that night

When the rolling eyes of the lighthouse  
there on the fatal neck

Of land running out into rock—they had  
saved many hundreds from wreck—

Glared on our way toward death, I remem-  
ber I thought, as we past,

Does it matter how many they saved? we  
are all of us wreck'd at last—

'Do you fear?' and there came thro' the  
roar of the breaker a whisper, a breath,

'Fear? am I not with you? I am frightened  
at life not death.'

### III

And the suns of the limitless Universe  
sparkled and shone in the sky,

Flashing with fires as of God, but we knew  
that their light was a lie—

Bright as with deathless hope—but, how-  
ever they sparkled and shone,

The dark little worlds running round them  
were worlds of woe like our own—

No soul in the heaven above, no soul on  
the earth below,

A fiery scroll written over with lamentation  
and woe.

### IV

See, we were nursed in the drear nightfold  
of your fatalist creed,

And we turn'd to the growing dawn, we  
had hoped for a dawn indeed,

When the light of a Sun that was coming  
would scatter the ghosts of the Past,

And the cramping creeds that had mad-  
den'd the peoples would vanish at last,  
And we broke away from the Christ, our  
human brother and friend,  
For He spoke, or it seem'd that He spoke,  
of a Hell without help, without end.

### V

Hoped for a dawn and it came, but the  
promise had faded away;

We had past from a cheerless night to the  
glare of a drearier day;

He is only a cloud and a smoke who was  
once a pillar of fire,

The guess of a worm in the dust and the  
shadow of its desire—

Of a worm as it writhes in a world of the  
weak trodden down by the strong,

Of a dying worm in a world, all massacre,  
murder, and wrong.

### VI

O we poor orphans of nothing—alone on  
that lonely shore—

Born of the brainless Nature who knew  
not that which she bore!

Trusting no longer that earthly flower  
would be heavenly fruit—

Come from the brute, poor souls—no souls  
—and to die with the brute—

### VII

Nay, but I am not claiming your pity: I  
know you of old—

Small pity for those that have ranged from  
the narrow warmth of your fold,

Where you bawl'd the dark side of your  
faith and a God of eternal rage,

Till you flung us back on ourselves, and  
the human heart, and the Age.

### VIII

But pity—the Pagan held it a vice—was in  
her and in me,

Helpless, taking the place of the pitying  
God that should be!

Pity for all that aches in the grasp of an  
idiot power,

And pity for our own selves on an earth  
that bore not a flower;

## DESPAIR

Pity for all that suffers on land or in air or  
the deep,  
And pity for our own selves till we long'd  
for eternal sleep.

### IX

'Lightly step over the sands! the waters—  
you hear them call!  
Life with its anguish, and horrors, and  
errors—away with it all!  
And she laid her hand in my own—she  
was always loyal and sweet—  
Till the points of the foam in the dusk  
came playing about our feet.  
*There* was a strong sea-current would  
sweep us out to the main.

'Ah God' tho' I felt as I spoke I was taking  
the name in vain—  
'Ah God' and we turn'd to each other, we  
kiss'd, we embraced, she and I,  
Knowing the Love we were used to believe  
everlasting would die:  
We had read their know-nothing books  
and we lean'd to the darker side—  
Ah God, should we find Him, perhaps,  
perhaps, if we died, if we died;  
We never had found Him on earth, this  
earth is a fatherless Hell—  
'Dear Love, for ever and ever, for ever and  
ever farewell,'  
Never a cry so desolate, not since the  
world began,  
Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the  
coming of man!

### X

But the blind wave cast me ashore, and  
you saved me, a valueless life.  
Not a grain of gratitude mine! You have  
parted the man from the wife.  
I am left alone on the land, she is all alone  
in the sea;  
If a curse meant ought, I would curse you  
for not having let me be.

### XI

Visions of youth—for my brain was drunk  
with the water, it seems;  
I had past into perfect quiet at length out  
of pleasant dreams,

And the transient trouble of drowning—  
what was it when match'd with the  
pains  
Of the hellish heat of a wretched life rush-  
ing back thro' the veins?

### XII

Why should I live? one son had forged on  
his father and fled,  
And if I believed in a God, I would thank  
him, the other is dead,  
And there was a baby-girl, that had never  
look'd on the light:  
Happiest she of us all, for she past from  
the night to the night.

### XIII

But the crime, if a crime, of her eldest-  
born, her glory, her boast,  
Struck hard at the tender heart of the  
mother, and broke it almost;  
Tho', glory and shame dying out for ever  
in endless time,  
Does it matter so much whether crown'd  
for a virtue, or hang'd for a crime?

### XIV

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood there,  
naked, amazed  
In a world of arrogant opulence, fear'd  
myself turning crazed,  
And I would not be mock'd in a mad-  
house! and she, the delicate wife,  
With a grief that could only be cured, if  
cured, by the surgeon's knife,—

### XV

Why should we bear with an hour of tor-  
ture, a moment of pain,  
If every man die for ever, if all his griefs  
are in vain,  
And the homeless planet at length will be  
wheel'd thro' the silence of space,  
Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing  
race,  
When the worm shall have writhed its last,  
and its last brother-worm will have  
fled  
From the dead fossil skull that is left in  
the rocks of an earth that is dead?

## DESPAIR

### XVI

Have I crazed myself over their horrible  
infidel writings? O yes,  
For these are the new dark ages, you see,  
of the popular press,  
When the bat comes out of his cave, and  
the owls are whooping at noon,  
And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill and  
crows to the sun and the moon,  
Till the Sun and the Moon of our science  
are both of them turn'd into blood,  
And Hope will have broken her heart,  
running after a shadow of good;  
For their knowing and know-nothing books  
are scatter'd from hand to hand—  
*We* have knelt in your know-all chapel too  
looking over the sand.

### XVII

What! I should call on that Infinite Love  
that has served us so well?  
Infinite cruelty rather that made everlasting  
Hell,  
Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and  
does what he will with his own;  
Better our dead brute mother who never  
has heard us groan!

### XVIII

Hell? if the souls of men were immortal,  
as men have been told,  
The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and  
the miser would yearn for his gold,  
And so there were Hell for ever! but were  
there a God as you say,  
His Love would have power over Hell till  
it utterly vanish'd away.

### XIX

Ah yet—I have had some glimmer, at  
times, in my gloomiest woe,  
Of a God behind all—after all—the great  
God for aught that I know;  
But the God of Love and of Hell together  
—they cannot be thought,  
If there be such a God, may the Great  
God curse him and bring him to  
nought!

### XX

Blasphemy! whose is the fault? is it mine?  
for why would you save  
A madman to vex you with wretched  
words, who is best in his grave?  
Blasphemy! ay, why not, being damn'd  
beyond hope of grace?  
O would I were yonder with her, and away  
from your faith and your face!  
Blasphemy! true! I have scared you pale  
with my scandalous talk,  
But the blasphemy to *my* mind lies all in  
the way that you walk.

### XXI

Hence! she is gone! can I stay? can I  
breathe divorced from the Past?  
You needs must have good lynx-eyes if I  
do not escape you at last.  
Our orthodox coroner doubtless will find  
it a felo-de-se,  
And the stake and the cross-road, fool, if  
you will, does it matter to me?

## THE ANCIENT SAGE

A THOUSAND summers ere the time of  
Christ  
From out his ancient city came a Seer  
Whom one that loved, and honour'd him,  
and yet  
Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but worn  
From wasteful living, follow'd—in his  
hand  
A scroll of verse—till that old man before  
A cavern whence an affluent fountain  
pour'd  
From darkness into daylight, turn'd and  
spoke.

This wealth of waters might but seem to  
draw  
From yon dark cave, but, son, the source  
is higher,  
Yon summit half-a-league in air—and  
higher,  
The cloud that hides it—higher still, the  
heavens  
Whereby the cloud was moulded, and  
whereout

## THE ANCIENT SAGE

The cloud descended. Force is from the heights.

I am wearied of our city, son, and go  
To spend my one last year among the hills.  
What hast thou there? Some deathsong  
for the Ghouls  
To make their banquet relish? let me read.

"How far thro' all the bloom and brake  
That nightingale is heard!  
What power but the bird's could make  
This music in the bird?  
How summer-bright are yonder skies,  
And earth as fair in hue!  
And yet what sign of aught that lies  
Behind the green and blue?  
But man to-day is fancy's fool  
As man hath ever been.  
The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule  
Were never heard or seen."

If thou would'st hear the Nameless, and  
wilt dive  
Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,  
There, brooding by the central altar, thou  
May'st haply learn the Nameless hath a  
voice,  
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise,  
As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst not  
know;  
For Knowledge is the swallow on the lake  
That sees and stirs the surface-shadow  
there  
But never yet hath dipt into the abysm,  
The Abyss of all Abysses, beneath, within  
The blue of sky and sea, the green of earth,  
And in the million-millionth of a grain  
Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,  
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,  
To me, my son, more mystic than myself,  
Or even than the Nameless is to me.

And when thou sendest thy free soul  
thro' heaven,  
Nor understandest bound nor boundless-  
ness,  
Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred  
names.

And if the Nameless should withdraw  
from all  
Thy frailty counts most real, all thy world  
Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark.

"And since—from when this earth began—  
The Nameless never came  
Among us, never spake with man,  
And never named the Name"—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my  
son,  
Nor canst thou prove the world thou  
movest in,

Thou canst not prove that thou art body  
alone,

Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit  
alone,

Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in  
one:

Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no  
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay my son,  
Thou canst not prove that I, who speak  
with thee,

Am not thyself in converse with thyself,  
For nothing worthy proving can be proven,  
Nor yet disproven: wherefore thou be  
wise,

Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,  
And cling to Faith beyond the forms of  
Faith!

She reels not in the storm of warring words,  
She brightens at the clash of 'Yes' and  
'No,'

She sees the Best that glimmers thro' the  
Worst,

She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,  
She spies the summer thro' the winter bud,  
She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,  
She hears the lark within the songless egg,  
She finds the fountain where they wail'd  
'Mirage'!

"What Power? aught akin to Mind,  
The mind in me and you?  
Or power as of the Gods gone blind  
Who see not what they do?"

But some in yonder city hold, my son,  
That none but Gods could build this house  
of ours,

So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond  
All work of man, yet, like all work of man,  
A beauty with defect—till That which  
knows,

And is not known, but felt thro' what we  
feel

## THE ANCIENT SAGE

Within ourselves is highest, shall descend  
On this half-deed, and shape it at the last  
According to the Highest in the Highest.

"What Power but the Years that make  
And break the vase of clay,  
And stir the sleeping earth, and wake  
The bloom that fades away?  
What rulers but the Days and Hours  
That cancel weal with woe,  
And wind the front of youth with flowers,  
And cap our age with snow?"

The days and hours are ever glancing by,  
And seem to flicker past thro' sun and  
shade,  
Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or  
Pain;  
But with the Nameless is nor Day nor  
Hour;  
Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from  
thought to thought,  
Break into 'Thens' and 'Whens' the Eternal  
Now:

This double seeming of the single world!—  
My words are like the babblings in a dream  
Of nightmare, when the babblings break  
the dream.

But thou be wise in this dream-world of  
ours,  
Nor take thy dial for thy deity,  
But make the passing shadow serve thy  
will.

"The years that made the stripling wise  
Undo their work again,  
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,  
The last and least of men;  
Who clings to earth, and once would dare  
Hell-heat or Arctic cold,  
And now one breath of cooler air  
Would loose him from his hold;  
His winter chills him to the root,  
He withers marrow and mind;  
The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit  
Is jutting thro' the rind;  
The tiger spasms tear his chest,  
The palsy wags his head;  
The wife, the sons, who love him best  
Would fain that he were dead;  
The griefs by which he once was wrung  
Were never worth the while"—

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow  
life  
Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell?

"The shaft of scorn that once had stung  
But wakes a dotard smile."

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

"The stateman's brain that sway'd the past  
Is feeblar than his knees;  
The passive sailor wrecks at last  
In ever-silent seas;  
The warrior hath forgot his arms,  
The Learned all his lore;  
The changing market frets or charms  
The merchant's hope no more;  
The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,  
And now is lost in cloud;  
The plowman passes, bent with pain,  
To mix with what he plow'd;  
The poet whom his Age would quote  
As heir of endless fame—  
He knows not ev'n the book he wrote,  
Not even his own name.

For man has overlived his day,  
And, darkening in the light,  
Scarce feels the senses break away  
To mix with ancient Night."

The shell must break before the bird can  
fly.

"The years that when my Youth began  
Had set the lily and rose  
By all my ways where'er they ran,  
Have ended mortal foes;  
My rose of love for ever gone,  
My lily of truth and trust—  
They made her lily and rose in one,  
And changed her into dust.  
O rosetree planted in my grief,  
And growing, on her tomb,  
Her dust is greening in your leaf,  
Her blood is in your bloom.  
O slender lily waving there,  
And laughing back the light,  
In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'  
When all is dark as night."

My son, the world is dark with griefs and  
graves,

## THE ANCIENT SAGE

So dark that men cry out against the Heavens.  
 Who knows but that the darkness is in man?  
 The doors of Night may be the gates of Light;  
 For wert thou born or blind or deaf, and then  
 Suddenly heal'd, how would'st thou glory in all  
 The splendours and the voices of the world!  
 And we, the poor earth's dying race, and yet  
 No phantoms, watching from a phantom shore  
 Await the last and largest sense to make  
 The phantom walls of this illusion fade,  
 And show us that the world is wholly fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd years  
 As laughter over wine,  
 And vain the laughter as the tears,  
 O brother, mine or thine,

For all that laugh, and all that weep  
 And all that breathe are one  
 Slight ripple on the boundless deep  
 That moves, and all is gone."

But that one ripple on the boundless deep  
 Feels that the deep is boundless, and itself  
 For ever changing form, but evermore  
 One with the boundless motion of the deep.

"Yet wine and laughter friends! and set  
 The lamps alight, and call  
 For golden music, and forget  
 The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day, my son—  
 But earth's dark forehead flings athwart the heavens  
 Her shadow crown'd with stars—and yonder—out  
 To northward—some that never set, but pass  
 From sight and night to lose themselves in day.  
 I hate the black negation of the bier,

And wish the dead, as happier than ourselves  
 And higher, having climb'd one step beyond  
 Our village miseries, might be borne in white  
 To burial or to burning, hymn'd from hence  
 With songs in praise of death, and crown'd with flowers!

"O worms and maggots of to-day  
 Without their hope of wings!"

But louder than thy rhyme the silent Word  
 Of that world-prophet in the heart of man.

"Tho' some have gleams or so they say  
 Of more than mortal things."

To-day? but what of yesterday? for oft  
 On me, when boy, there came what then  
 I call'd,  
 Who knew no books and no philosophies,  
 In my boy-phrase 'The Passion of the Past.'  
 The first gray streak of earliest summer-dawn,  
 The last long stripe of waning crimson gloom,  
 As if the late and early were but one—  
 A height, a broken grange, a grove, a flower  
 Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and lost and gone!'  
 A breath, a whisper—some divine farewell—  
 Desolate sweetness—far and far away—  
 What had he loved, what had he lost, the boy?  
 I know not and I speak of what has been.  
 And more, my son! for more than once when I  
 Sat all alone, revolving in myself  
 The word that is the symbol of myself,  
 The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,  
 And past into the Nameless, as a cloud  
 Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs  
 Were strange not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,  
 But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self

## THE ANCIENT SAGE

The gain of such large life as match'd with  
ours

Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in  
words,

Themselves but shadows of a shadow-  
world.

"And idle gleams will come and go  
But still the clouds remain;"

The clouds themselves are children of the  
Sun.

"And Night and Shadow rule below  
When only Day should reign."

And Day and Night are children of the  
Sun,

And idle gleams to thee are light to me.

Some say, the Light was father of the  
Night,

And some, the Night was father of the  
Light,

No night no day!—I touch thy world  
again—

No ill no good! such counter-terms, my  
son,

Are border-races, holding, each its own  
By endless war: but night enough is there  
In yon dark city: get thee back: and since  
The key to that weird casket, which for  
thee

But holds a skull, is neither thine nor mine,  
But in the hand of what is more than man,  
Or in man's hand when man is more than  
man,

Let be thy wail and help thy fellow men,  
And make thy gold thy vassal not thy king,  
And fling free alms into the beggar's bowl,  
And send the day into the darken'd heart;  
Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,  
A dying echo from a falling wall;  
Nor care—for Hunger hath the Evil eye—  
To vex the noon with fiery gems, or fold  
Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous  
looms;

Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,  
Nor drown thyself with flies in honied  
wine;

Nor thou be rageful, like a handled bee,  
And lose thy life by usage of thy sting;  
Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for harm,

Nor make a snail's horn shrink for wanton-  
ness;

And more—think well! Do—well will follow  
thought,

And in the fatal sequence of this world  
An evil thought may soil thy children's  
blood;

But curb the beast would cast thee in the  
mire,

And leave the hot swamp of voluptuous-  
ness

A cloud between the Nameless and thyself,  
And lay thine uphill shoulder to the wheel,  
And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence,  
if thou

Look higher, then—perchance—thou  
mayest—beyond

A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,  
And past the range of Night and Shadow—  
see

The high-heaven dawn of more than  
mortal day

Strike on the Mount of Vision!  
So, farewell.

## THE FLIGHT

### I

ARE you sleeping? have you forgotten? do  
not sleep, my sister dear!

How *can* you sleep? the morning brings  
the day I hate and fear;

The cock has crow'd already once, he  
crows before his time;

Awake! the creeping glimmer steals, the  
hills are white with rime.

### II

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah, fold  
me to your breast!

Ah, let me weep my fill once more, and cry  
myself to rest!

To rest? to rest and wake no more were  
better rest for me,

Than to waken every morning to that face  
I loathe to see:

### III

I envied your sweet slumber, all night so  
calm you lay,

The night was calm, the morn is calm, and  
like another day;

## THE FLIGHT

But I could wish yon moaning sea would rise and burst the shore, And such a whirlwind blow these woods, as never blew before.	But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam of all things ill— It is not Love but Hate that weds a bride against her will;
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### IV

For, one by one, the stars went down across the gleaming pane, And project after project rose, and all of them were vain; The blackthorn-blossom fades and falls and leaves the bitter sloe, The hope I catch at vanishes and youth is turn'd to woe.	IX Hate, that would pluck from this true breast the locket that I wear, The precious crystal into which I braided Edwin's hair! The love that keeps this heart alive beats on it night and day— One golden curl, his golden gift, before he past away.
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### V

Come, speak a little comfort! all night I pray'd with tears, And yet no comfort came to me, and now the morn appears, When he will tear me from your side, who bought me for his slave: This father pays his debt with me, and weds me to my grave.	X He left us weeping in the woods; his boat was on the sand; How slowly down the rocks he went, how loth to quit the land! And all my life was darken'd, as I saw the white sail run, And darken, up that lane of light into the setting sun.
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### VI

What father, this or mine, was he, who, on that summer day When I had fall'n from off the crag we clamber'd up in play, Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd, and took and kiss'd me, and again He kiss'd me; and I loved him then; he was my father then.	XI How often have we watch'd the sun fade from us thro' the West, And follow Edwin to those isles, those islands of the Blest! Is <i>he</i> not there? would I were there, the friend, the bride, the wife, With him, where summer never dies, with Love, the Sun of life!
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### VII

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a tyrant vice! The Godless Jephtha vows his child . . . to one cast of the dice. These ancient woods, this Hall at last will go—perhaps have gone, Except his own meek daughter yield her life, heart, soul to one—	XII O would I were in Edwin's arms—once more—to feel his breath Upon my cheek—on Edwin's ship, with Edwin, ev'n in death, Tho' all about the shuddering wreck the death-white sea should rave, Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows of the wave.
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### VIII

To one who knows I scorn him. O the formal mocking bow, The cruel smile, the courtly phrase that masks his malice now—	XIII Shall I take <i>him</i> ? I kneel with <i>him</i> ? I swear and swear forsworn To love him most, whom most I loathe, to honour whom I scorn?
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## THE FLIGHT

The Fiend would yell, the grave would  
yawn, my mother's ghost would  
rise—

To lie, to lie—in God's own house—the  
blackest of all lies!

### XIV

Why—rather than that hand in mine, tho'  
every pulse would freeze,  
I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of some  
foul disease:

Wed him? I will not wed him, let them  
spurn me from the doors,  
And I will wander till I die about the  
barren moors.

### XV

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd her  
bridegroom on her bridal night—

If mad, then I am mad, but sane, if she  
were in the right.

My father's madness makes me mad—but  
words are only words!

I am not mad, not yet, not quite—There!  
listen how the birds

### XVI

Begin to warble yonder in the budding  
orchard trees!

The lark has past from earth to Heaven  
upon the morning breeze!

How gladly, were I one of those, how early  
would I wake!

And yet the sorrow that I bear is sorrow  
for *his* sake.

### XVII

They love their mates, to whom they sing;  
or else their songs, that meet

The morning with such music, would  
never be so sweet!

And tho' these fathers will not hear, the  
blessed Heavens are just,

And Love is fire, and burns the feet would  
trample it to dust.

### XVIII

A door was open'd in the house—who?  
who? my father sleeps!

A stealthy foot upon the stair! he—some  
one—this way creeps!

If he? yes, he . . . lurks, listens, fears his  
victim may have fled—

He! where is some sharp-pointed thing?  
he comes, and finds me dead.

### XIX

Not he, not yet! and time to act—but how  
my temples burn!

And idle fancies flutter me, I know not  
where to turn;

Speak to me, sister; counsel me; this mar-  
riage must not be.

You only know the love that makes the  
world a world to me!

### XX

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived—but we  
were left alone:

That other left us to ourselves; he cared  
not for his own;

So all the summer long we roam'd in these  
wild woods of ours,

My Edwin loved to call us then 'His two  
wild woodland flowers.'

### XXI

Wild flowers blowing side by side in God's  
free light and air,

Wild flowers of the secret woods, when  
Edwin found us there,

Wild woods in which we roved with him,  
and heard his passionate vow,

Wild woods in which we rove no more, if  
we be parted now!

### XXII

You will not leave me thus in grief to  
wander forth forlorn;

We never changed a bitter word, not once  
since we were born;

Our dying mother join'd our hands; she  
knew this father well;

She bad us love, like souls in Heaven, and  
now I fly from Hell,

### XXIII

And you with me; and we shall light upon  
some lonely shore,

Some lodge within the waste sea-dunes,  
and hear the waters roar,

## THE FLIGHT

And see the ships from out the West go  
dipping thro' the foam,  
And sunshine on that sail at last which  
brings our Edwin home.

### XXIV

But look, the morning grows apace, and  
lights the old church-tower,  
And lights the clock! the hand points five—  
—O me—it strikes the hour—  
I bide no more, I meet my fate, whatever  
ills betide!  
Arise, my own true sister, come forth! the  
world is wide.

### XXV

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my eyes are  
dim with dew,  
I seem to see a new-dug grave up yonder  
by the yew!  
If we should never more return, but  
wander hand in hand  
With breaking hearts, without a friend,  
and in a distant land.

### XXVI

O sweet, they tell me that the world is hard,  
and harsh of mind,  
But can it be so hard, so harsh, as those  
that should be kind?  
That matters not: let come what will; at  
last the end is sure,  
And every heart that loves with truth is  
equal to endure.

## TOMORROW

### I

HER, that yer Honour was spakin' to?  
Whin, yer Honour? last year—  
Standin' here be the bridge, when last yer  
Honour was here?  
An' yer Honour ye gev her the top of the  
mornin', 'Tomorra' says she.  
What did they call her, yer Honour? They  
call'd her Molly Magee.  
An' yer Honour's the thrue ould blood  
that always manes to be kind,  
But there's rason in all things, yer Honour,  
for Molly was out of her mind.

### II

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan night  
comin' down be the sthrane,  
An' it seems to me now like a bit of yisther-  
day in a dhrame—  
Here where yer Honour seen her—there  
was but a slip of a moon,  
But I hard thim—Molly Magee wid her  
batchelor, Danny O'Roon—  
'You've been takin' a dhrop o' the crathur'  
an' Danny says 'Troth, an' I been  
Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus O'Shea  
at Katty's shebeen;<sup>1</sup>  
But I must be lavin' ye soon.' 'Ochone are  
ye goin' away?'  
'Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate' he says  
'over the say'—  
'An' whin will ye meet me agin?' an' I  
hard him 'Molly asthore,  
I'll meet you agin tomorra,' says he, 'be  
the chapel-door.'  
'An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?' 'O'  
Monday mornin'' says he;  
'An' shure thin ye'll meet me tomorra?'  
'Tomorra, tomorra, Machree!'  
Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honour,  
that had no likin' for Dan,  
Call'd from her cabin an' told her to come  
away from the man,  
An' Molly Magee kem flyin' across me, as  
light as a lark,  
An' Dan stood there for a minute, an' thin  
wint into the dark.  
But wirrah! the storm that night—the  
tundher, an' rain that fell,  
An' the sthrames runnin' down at the  
back o' the glin 'ud 'a dhrownded  
Hell.

### III

But airth was at pace nixt mornin', an'  
Hiven in its glory smiled,  
As the Holy Mother o' Glory that smiles  
at her sleepin' child—  
Ethen—she stept an the chapel-green, an'  
she turn'd herself roun'  
Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for  
Danny was not to be foun',

<sup>1</sup> Grog-shop.

## TOMORROW

An' many's the time that I watch'd her at  
mass lettin' down the tear,  
For the Divil a Danny was there, yer  
Honour, for forty year.

### IV

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the rose  
an' the white o' the May,  
An' yer hair as black as the night, an' yer  
eyes as bright as the day!  
Achora, yer laste little whisper was sweet  
as the lilt of a bird!  
Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to music  
wid ivery word!  
An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre in sich  
an illigant han',  
An' the fall of yer foot in the dance was as  
light as snow an the lan',  
An' the sun kem out of a cloud whiniver  
ye walkt in the shreet,  
An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda, an'  
laid himself undher yer feet,  
An' I loved ye meself wid a heart and a  
half, me darlin', and he  
'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a kiss of  
ye, Molly Magee.

### V

But shure we wor betther frinds whin I  
crack'd his skull for her sake,  
An' he ped me back wid the best he could  
give at ould Donovan's wake—  
For the boys wor about her agin whin Dan  
didn't come to the fore,  
An' Shamus along wid the rest, but she  
put thim all to the door.  
An', afther, I tried her meself av the bird  
'ud come to me call,  
But Molly, begorrah, 'ud listhen to naither  
at all, at all.

### VI

An' her nabours an frinds 'ud consowl an'  
condowl wid her, airly and late,  
'Your Danny,' they says, 'niver crasst over  
say to the Sassenach whate;  
He's gone to the States, aroon, an' he's  
married another wife,  
An' ye'll niver set eyes an the face of the  
thraithur agin in life!

An' to dhrame of a married man, death  
alive, is a mortal sin.'  
But Molly says 'I'd his hand-promise, an'  
shure he'll meet me agin.'

### VII

An' afther her paarints had inter'd glory,  
an' both in wan day,  
She began to spake to herself, the crathur,  
an' whisper, an' say  
'Tomorra, Tomorra!' an' Father Molowny  
he tuk her in han',  
'Molly, you're manin', he says, 'me dear,  
av I undherstan',  
That ye'll meet your paarints agin an' yer  
Danny O'Roon afore God  
Wid his blessed Marthyrs an' Saints,' an'  
she gev him a frindly nod,  
'Tomorra, Tomorra,' she says, an' she  
didn't intind to desave,  
But her wits wor dead, an' her hair was as  
white as the snow an a grave.

### VIII

Arrah now, here last month they wor  
diggin' the bog, an' they foun'  
Dhrownded in black bog-wather a corp  
lyin' undher groun'.

### IX

Yer Honour's own agint, he says to me  
wanst, at Katty's shebeen,  
'The Divil take all the black lan', for a  
blessin' 'ud come wid the green!  
An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut his  
bit o' turf for the fire?  
But och! bad scan to the bogs whin they  
swallies the man intire!  
An' sorra the bog that's in Hiven wid all  
the light an' the glow,  
An' there's hate enough, shure, widout  
thim in the Divil's kitchen below.

### X

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I hard  
his Riverence say,  
Could keep their haithen kings in the flesh  
for the Jidgemint day,

## TOMORROW

An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they kep  
the cat an' the dog,  
But it 'ud 'a been aisier work av they lived  
be an Irish bog.

### XI

How-an-iver they laid this body they foun'  
an the grass  
Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud see  
it that wint in to mass—  
But a frish gination had riz, an' most of  
the ould was few,  
An' I didn't know him meself, an' nōne of  
the parish knew.

### XII

But Molly kem limpin' up wid her stick,  
she was lamed iv a knee,  
Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, 'Div ye  
know him, Molly Magee?'  
An' she stood up strait as the Queen of the  
world—she lifted her head—  
'He said he would meet me tomorra' an'  
dhropt down dead an the dead.

### XIII

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye  
would start back agin into life,  
Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer wake  
like husban' an' wife.  
Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet for the  
frinds that was gone!  
Sorra the silent throat but we hard it cryin'  
'Ochone!  
An' Shamus O'Shea that has now ten  
childer, hansome an' tall,  
Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if he  
had lost thim all.

### XIV

Thin his Riverence buried thim both in  
wan grave be the dead boor-tree,<sup>1</sup>  
The young man Danny O'Roon wid his  
ould woman, Molly Magee.

### XV

May all the flowers o' Jeroosilim blossom  
an' spring from the grass,  
Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other—as ye  
did—over yer Crass!

<sup>1</sup> Elder-tree.

An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid his  
song to the Sun an' the Moon,  
An' tell thim in Hiven about Molly Magee  
an' her Danny O'Roon,  
Till Holy St. Pether gets up wid his kays  
an' opens the gate!  
An' shure, be the Crass, that's betther nor  
cuttin' the Sassenach whate  
To be there wid the Blessed Mother, an'  
Saints an' Marthys galore,  
An' singin' yer 'Aves' an' 'Pathers' for iver  
an' ivermore.

### XVI

An' now that I tould yer Honour whatever  
I hard an' seen,  
Yer Honour 'ill give me a thrifle to dhrink  
yer health in potheen.

## THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS

### I

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess! fur it mun  
be the time about now  
When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end close  
wi' her paalis fro' the cow.  
Eh! tha be new to the plaace—thou'rt  
gaapin'!—doesn't tha sec  
I calls 'em arter the fellers es once was  
sweet upo' me?

### II

Naay to be sewer it be past 'er time. What  
maakes 'er sa laate?  
Goa to the laane at the back, an' loook  
thruf Maddison's gaate!

### III

Sweet-arts! Molly belike may 'a lighted  
to-night upo' one.  
Sweet-arts! thanks to the Lord that I niver  
not listen'd to noan!  
So I sits i' my oān armchair wi' my oan  
kettle theree o' the hob,  
An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the  
second, an' Steevie an' Rob.

### IV

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my kneec. Thou  
that i' spite o' the men  
I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two  
'oonderd a-year to mysen;

## THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS

Yis! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es ony  
lass i' the Shere;  
An' thou be es pretty a Tabby, but Robby  
I seed thruf ya theree.

### V

Feyther 'ud saäy I wur ugly es sin, an' I  
beánt not vaain,  
But I niver wur downright hugly, thaw  
soom 'ud 'a thowt ma plaain,  
An' I wasn't sa plaain i' pink ribbons, ye  
said I wur pretty i' pinks,  
An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beánt sich  
a fool as ye thinks;  
Ye was stroakin ma down wi' the 'air, as  
I be a-stroakin o' you,  
But whiniver I looked i' the glass I wur  
sewer that it couldn't be true;  
Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye knaw'd it  
wur pleasant to 'ear,  
Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty, but  
my two 'oonderd a-year.

### VI

D'ya mind the murnin' when we was a-  
walkin' togither, an' stood  
By the claa'y'd-ooop pond, that the foälk be  
sa scared at, i' Gigglesby wood,  
Wheer the poor wench drownid hersen,  
black Sal, es 'ed been disgraaced?  
An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur a-  
creeäpin about my waaist;  
An' me es wur allus afeard'd of a man's  
gittin' ower fond,  
I sidled awaay an' awaäy till I plumpt foot  
fusti' the pond;  
And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa well, as  
I did that daäy,  
Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha hoickt  
my feet wi' a flop fro' the claa'y.  
Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop thy  
taäil, tha may gie ma a kiss,  
Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoam an'  
wur niver sa nigh saayin' Yis.  
But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we was  
shaämed to cross Gigglesby Greean,  
Fur a cat may looök at a king thou knaws  
but the cat mun be clean.  
Sa we boath on us kep out o' sight o' the  
winders o' Gigglesby Hinn—

Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet! they  
pricks cleän thruf to the skin—  
An' wa boath slinkt 'oam by the brokken  
shed i' the laäne at the back,  
Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha once, an'  
thou runn'd oop o' the thack;  
An' tha squeeze'd my 'and i' the shed, fur  
theree we was forced to 'ide,  
Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin', and  
one o' the Tommies beside.

### VII

Theree now, what art'a mewin at, Steevie?  
for owt I can tell—  
Robby wur fust to be sewer, or I mowt 'a  
liked tha as well.

### VIII

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the while I  
wur chaängin' my gown,  
An' I thowt shall I chaänge my staäte? but,  
O Lord, upo' coomin' down—  
My bran-new carpet es fresh es a midder  
o' flowers i' Maay—  
Why 'edn't tha wiped thy shoes? it wur  
clatted all ower wi' claa'y.  
An' I could 'a cried ammost, fur I seed  
that it couldn't be,  
An' Robby I gied tha a raätin that sattled  
thy coortin o' me.  
An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we was  
a-cleänin' the floor,  
That a man be a durty thing an' a trouble  
an' plague wi' indoor.  
But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck to tha  
moor na the rest,  
But I couldn't 'a lived wi' a man an' I  
knaws it be all fur the best.

### IX

Naäy—let ma stroak tha down till I maäkes  
tha es smooth es silk,  
But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou'd  
not 'a been worth thy milk,  
Thou'd niver 'a cotch'd ony mice but 'a  
left me the work to do,  
And 'a taen to the bottle beside, so es all  
that I 'ears be true;  
But I loovs tha to maae thysen 'appy, an'  
soa purr awaäy, my dear,  
Thou 'ed wellnigh purr'd ma awaäy fro'  
my oan two 'oonderd a-year.

## THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS

### X

Sweärin agean, you Toms, as ye used to do  
twelve year sin'!  
Ye niver 'card Steevie sweär 'cep' it wur  
at a dog coomin' in,  
An' boath o' ye mun be fools to be hallus  
a-shawin' your claws,  
Fur I niver cared nothink for neither—an'  
one o' ye dead ye knaws!  
Coom give hoaver then, weant ye? I war-  
rant ye soom fine daäy—  
Theere, lig down—I shall hev to gie one  
or tother awaäy.  
Can't ye taake pattern by Steevie? ye shant  
hev a drop fro' the paail.  
Steevie be right good manners bang thruf  
to the tip o' the taail.

### XI

Robby, git down wi'tha, wilt tha? let  
Steevie coom oop o' my knee.  
Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh been  
the Steevie fur me!  
Robby wur fust to be sewer, 'e wur burn  
an' bred i' the 'ouse,  
But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver  
patted a mouse.

### XII

An' I beant not vaain, but I knaws I 'ed  
led tha a quieter life  
Nor her wi' the hepitaph yonder! "A  
faaithful an' loovin' wife!"  
An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an' thy  
windmill oop o' the croft,  
Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did tha?  
but that wur a bit ower soft,  
Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi' a  
niced red faace, an' es clean  
Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a bran-  
new 'ead o' the Queeän,  
An' thy farmin' es clean es thysen', fur,  
Steevie, tha kep' it sa neät  
That I niver not spied sa much es a poppy  
along wi' the wheat,  
An' the wool of a thistle a-flyin' an' seeädin'  
tha haated to see;  
'Twur es bad es a battle-twig<sup>1</sup> ere 'i my  
oan blue chaumber to me.

<sup>1</sup> Earwig.

Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur I  
could 'a taäen to tha well,  
But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a bouncin'  
boy an' a gell.

### XIII

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es I be  
mysen o' my cats,  
But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I hevn't  
naw likin' fur brats;  
Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop, an'  
they goäs fur a walk,  
Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an' doesn't  
not 'inder the talk!  
But their bottles o' pap, an' their mucky  
bibs, an' the clats an' the clouts,  
An' their mashin' their toys to pieäces an'  
maakin' ma deaf wi' their shouts,  
An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if they  
was set upo' springs,  
An' a haxin' ma hawkard questions, an'  
saayin' ondecnt things,  
An' a-callin' ma 'hugly' mayhap to my  
faäce, or a teärin' my gown—  
Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them  
Tommies—Steevie git down.

### XIV

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you.  
I tell'd ya, na moor o' that!  
Tom, lig theere o' the cushion, an' tother  
Tom 'ere o' the mat.

### XV

Theere! I ha' master'd *them*! Hed I mar-  
ried the Tommies—O Lord,  
To loove an' obaay the Tommies! I  
couldn't 'a stuck by my word.  
To be horder'd about, an' waaked, when  
Molly 'd put out the light,  
By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at ony  
hour o' the night!  
An' the taable staäin'd wi' 'is aäle, an' the  
mud o' 'is boots o' the stairs,  
An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse, an' the  
mark o' 'is 'ead o' the chairs!  
An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a let  
me 'a hed my oän waay,  
Sa I likes 'em best wi' taails when they  
'evn't a word to saäy.

## THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS

### XVI

An' I sits i' my oan little parlour, an'  
 sarved by my oan little lass,  
 Wi' my oan little garden outside, an' my  
 oan bed o' sparrow-grass,  
 An' my oan door-poorch wi' the woodbine  
 an' jessmine a-dressin' it greean,  
 An' my oan fine Jackman i' purple a roabin'  
 the 'ouse like a Queean.

### XVII

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens es  
 I be abroad i' the laanes,  
 When I goas fur to coomfut the poor es  
 be down wi' their haaches an' their  
 paaains:  
 An' a haaf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o' meät  
 when it beánt too dear,  
 They maakcs ma a graater Laady nor 'er  
 i' the mansion theer,

Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how much  
 to spare or to spend;  
 An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if soä  
 please God, to the hend.

### XVIII

Mew! mew!—Bess wi' the milk! what ha  
 maade our Molly sa laate?  
 It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an' theree  
 —it be strikin' height—  
 'Cushie wur craazed fur 'er cauf' well—I  
 'eard 'er a maakin' 'er moan,  
 An' I thowt to mysen 'thank God that I  
 hevn't naw cauf o' my oan.'  
 Theree!

Set it down!

Now Robby!

You Tommies shall waaait to-night  
 Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their lap—  
 an' it sarves ye right.

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

LATE, my grandson! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracts,  
 Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I heard the curlews call,  
 I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley Hall.

So—your happy suit was blasted—she the faultless, the divine;  
 And you liken—boyish babble—this boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past;  
 Babble, babble; our old England may go down in babble at last.

'Curse him!' curse your fellow-victim? call him dotard in your rage?  
 Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a dotard's age.

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet perhaps she was not wise;  
 I remember how you kiss'd the miniature with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting—Amy's arms about my neck—  
 Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that clasp'd my neck had flown;  
 I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you sicken for her sake?  
 You, not you! your modern amourist is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a timid child;  
 But your Judith—but your worldling—*she* had never driven me wild.

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the golden ring,  
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a morn of Spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefer lease of life,  
While she vows 'till death shall part us,' she the would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings—father, mother—be content,  
Ev'n the homely farm can teach us there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now into the ground,  
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his feet upon the hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to crush the Moslem in his pride;  
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in which he died.

Yet how often I and Amy in the mouldering aisle have stood,  
Gazing for one pensive moment on that founder of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where of old we knelt in prayer,  
Close beneath the casement crimson with the shield of Locksley—there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if she smiled,  
Lies my Amy dead in child-birth, dead the mother, dead the child.

Dead—and sixty years ago, and dead her aged husband now—  
I this old white-headed dreamer stoopt and kiss'd her marble brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies, curses, passionate tears,  
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of the planet's dawning years.

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent ashes fall'n away.  
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the chancel stones,  
All his virtues—I forgive them—black in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight against the foe,  
Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my life in golden sequence ran,  
She with all the charm of woman, she with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet so lowly-sweet,  
Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing body and mind,  
She that link'd again the broken chain that bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while I wander'd down the coast,  
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the slighter ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard early lost at sea;  
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to be left alone,  
Pining for the stronger heart that once had beat beside her own.



## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt, being true as he was brave;  
Good, for Good is Good, he follow'd, yet he look'd beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren Death as lord of all,  
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the death, but kept the deck,  
Saving women and their babes, and sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever! Ever? no—for since our dying race began,  
Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave, and slew the wife  
Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds beyond the night;  
Ev'n the black Australian dying hopes he shall return, a white.

Truth for truth, and good for good! The Good, the True, the Pure, the Just  
Take the charm 'For ever' from them, and they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of 'Forward, Forward,' lost within a growing gloom;  
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space,  
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage into commonest commonplace!

'Forward' rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one.  
Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till ten thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian kings would flay  
Captives whom they caught in battle—iron-hearted victors they.

Ages after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Moguls,  
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls,

Then, and here in Edward's time, an age of noblest English names,  
Christian conquerors took and flung the conquer'd Christian into flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great;  
Christian love among the Churches look'd the twin of heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man had coin'd himself a curse:  
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was crueller? which was worse?

France had shown a light to all men, preach'd a Gospel, all men's good;  
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd and slaked the light with blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till the day begun—  
Crown'd with sunlight—over darkness—from the still unrisen sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the primal clan?  
'Kill your enemy, for you hate him,' still, 'your enemy' was a man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants maim the helpless horse, and drive  
Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the kindlier brutes alive.

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers—burnt at midnight, found at morn,  
Twisted hard in mortal agony with their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils? are we men?  
Sweet St. Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again,

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers  
Sisters, brothers—and the beasts—whose pains are hardly less than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end?  
Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wisdom for your friend.

Hopes the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past,  
Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave you courage to be wise:  
When was age so cramm'd with menace? madness? written, spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing sober fact to scorn,  
Cries to Weakest as to Strongest, 'Ye are equals, equal-born.'

Equal-born? O yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat.  
Charm us, Orator, till the Lion look no larger than the Cat,

Till the Cat thro' that mirage of overheated language loom  
Larger than the Lion,—Demos end in working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we fight her? shall we yield?  
Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear the voices from the field.

Those three hundred millions under one Imperial sceptre now,  
Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suffrage of the plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if only you and you,  
Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak were wholly true.

Plowmen, Shepherds, have I found, and more than once, and still could find,  
Sons of God, and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practised hustings-liar;  
So the Higher wields the Lower, while the Lower is the Higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine;  
Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sickening game;  
Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known to Europe, known to all;  
Step by step we rose to greatness,—thro' the tonguesters we may fall.

You that woo the Voices—tell them 'old experience is a fool,'  
Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek ones in their place;  
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal at her face.

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with the yelling street,  
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith, without the hope,  
Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll their ruins down the slope.

Authors—essayist, atheist, novelist, realist, rhymester, play your part,  
Paint the mortal shame of nature with the living hues of Art.

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul passions bare;  
Down with Reticence, down with Reverence—forward—naked—let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of your sewer;  
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism,—  
Forward, forward, ay and backward, downward too into the abysm.

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising race of men;  
Have we risen from out the beast, then back into the beast again?

Only 'dust to dust' for me that sicken at your lawless din,  
Dust in wholesome old-world dust before the newer world begin.

Heated am I? you—you wonder—well, it scarce becomes mine age—  
Patience! let the dying actor mouth his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the dotard fall asleep?  
Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think gray thoughts, for I am gray:  
After all the stormy changes shall we find a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and Jacquerie,  
Some diviner force to guide us thro' the days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the systems, Kingdoms and Republics fall,  
Something kindlier, higher, holier—all for each and each for all?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love, and Truth;  
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no man halt, or deaf or blind;  
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue—  
I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as yet so young?—

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion kill'd;  
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,  
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless Isles.

Warless? when her tens are thousands, and her thousands millions, then—  
All her harvest all too narrow—who can fancy warless men?

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

Warless? war will die out late then. Will it ever? late or soon?  
Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon dead world the moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. . . . On this day and at this hour,  
In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the Locksley tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting—Amy—sixty years ago—  
She and I—the moon was falling greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even where you see her now—  
Here we stood and claspt each other, swore the seeming-deathless vow. . . .

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hall, the dune, the grass!  
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the sun himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at this earthlier earth of ours,  
Closer on the Sun, perhaps a world of never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home of all good things.  
All good things may move in Hesper, perfect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper—Venus—were we native to that splendour or in Mars,  
We should see the Globe we groan in, fairest of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and madness, lust and spite,  
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of peaceful light?

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a star so silver-fair,  
Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur, 'Would to God that we were there'?

Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the immeasurable sea,  
Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me.

All the suns—are these but symbols of innumerable man,  
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled sphere?  
Well be grateful for the sounding watchword 'Evolution' here.

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,  
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud.

What are men that He should heed us? cried the king of sacred song;  
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother insect wrong,

While the silent Heavens roll, and Suns along their fiery way,  
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million miles a day.

Many an *Æon* moulded earth before her highest, man, was born,  
Many an *Æon* too may pass when earth is manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded—pools of salt, and plots of land—  
Shallow skin of green and azure—chains of mountain, grains of sand!

Only That which made us, meant us to be mightier by and by,  
Set the sphere of all the boundless Heavens within the human eye,

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the human soul;  
Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward, in the Whole.

\* \* \* \* \*

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the lion-guarded gate.  
Not to-night in Locksley Hall—to-morrow—you, you come so late.

Wreck'd—your train—or all but wreck'd? a shatter'd wheel? a vicious boy!  
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it well to wish you joy?

Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying in the Time,  
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,  
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street.

There the Master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily bread,  
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor,  
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'forward,' yours are hope and youth, but I  
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into the night;  
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of Even? light the glimmer of the dawn?  
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myraid coming changes earth will be  
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she gain her earthly-best,  
Would she find her human offspring this ideal man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time will swerve,  
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson! Death and Silence hold their own.  
Leave the Master in the first dark hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and honest, rustic Squire,  
Kindly landlord, boon companion—youthful jealousy is a liar.

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the madness from your brain.  
Let the trampled serpent show you that you have not lived in vain.

Youthful! youth and age are scholars yet but in the lower school,  
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village—Art and Grace are less and less:  
Science grows and Beauty dwindles—roofs of slated hideousness!

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

There is one old Hostel left us where they swing the Locksley shield,  
Till the peasant cow shall butt the 'Lion passant' from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old Poetry, passing hence,  
In the common deluge drowning old political common-sense!

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that have fled!  
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom disappears,  
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of eighty years.

\* \* \* \* \*

In this Hostel—I remember—I repent it o'er his grave—  
Like a clown—by chance he met me—I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer mantles all the mouldering bricks—  
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child of six—

While I shelter'd in this archway from a day of driving showers—  
Peep the winsome face of Edith like a flower among the flowers.

Here to-night! the Hall to-morrow, when they toll the Chapel bell!  
Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, 'I have loved thee well.'

Then a peal that shakes the portal—one has come to claim his bride,  
Her that shrank, and put me from her, shriek'd, and started from my side—

Silent echoes! You, my Leonard, use and not abuse your day,  
Move among your people, know them, follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his homelier brother men,  
Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised the school, and drain'd the fen.

Hears he now the Voice that wrong'd him? who shall swear it cannot be?  
Earth would never touch her worst, were one in fifty such as he.

Ere she gain her Heavenly-best, a God must mingle with the game:  
Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the Powers of Ill,  
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the fountains of the Will.

Follow you the Star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine.  
Forward, till you see the highest Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right—for man can half-control his doom—  
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle with the Past.  
I that loathed, have come to love him. Love will conquer at the last.

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I and you will bear the pall;  
Then I leave thee Lord and Master, latest Lord of Locksley Hall.

## PROLOGUE TO GENERAL HAMLEY

### PROLOGUE TO GENERAL HAMLEY

Our birches yellowing and from each  
The light leaf falling fast,  
While squirrels from our fiery beech  
Were bearing off the mast,  
You came, and look'd and loved the view  
Long-known and loved by me,  
Green Sussex fading into blue  
With one gray glimpse of sea;  
And, gazing from this height alone,  
We spoke of what had been  
Most marvellous in the wars your own  
Crimean eyes had seen;  
And now—like old-world inns that take  
Some warrior for a sign  
That therewithin a guest may make  
True cheer with honest wine—  
Because you heard the lines I read  
Nor utter'd word of blame,  
I dare without your leave to head  
These rhymings with your name,  
Who know you but as one of those  
I fain would meet again,  
Yet know you, as your England knows  
That you and all your men  
Were soldiers to her heart's desire,  
When, in the vanish'd year,  
You saw the league-long rampart-fire  
Flare from Tel-el-Kebir  
Thro' darkness, and the foe was driven,  
And Wolseley overthrew  
Arâbi, and the stars in heaven  
Paled, and the glory grew.

### THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA

OCTOBER 25, 1854

#### I

THE charge of the gallant three hundred,  
the Heavy Brigade!  
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of  
Russians,  
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the  
valley—and stay'd;  
For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred  
were riding by

When the points of the Russian lances  
arose in the sky;  
And he call'd 'Left wheel into line!' and  
they wheel'd and obey'd.  
Then he look'd at the host that had halted  
he knew not why,  
And he turn'd half round, and he bad his  
trumpeter sound  
To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as he  
waved his blade  
To the gallant three hundred whose glory  
will never die—  
'Follow,' and up the hill, up the hill, up  
the hill,  
Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

#### II

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and  
the might of the fight!  
Thousands of horsemen had gather'd there  
on the height,  
With a wing push'd out to the left and a  
wing to the right,  
And who shall escape if they close? but he  
dash'd up alone  
Thro' the great gray slope of men,  
Sway'd his sabre, and held his own  
Like an Englishman there and then;  
All in a moment follow'd with force  
Three that were next in their fiery course,  
Wedged themselves in between horse and  
horse,  
Fought for their lives in the narrow gap  
they had made—  
Four amid thousands! and up the hill, up  
the hill,  
Gallop'd the gallant three hundred, the  
Heavy Brigade.

#### III

Fell like a cannonshot,  
Burst like a thunderbolt,  
Crash'd like a hurricane,  
Broke thro' the mass from below,  
Drove thro' the midst of the foe,  
Plunged up and down, to and fro,  
Rode flashing blow upon blow,  
Brave Inniskillens and Greys  
Whirling their sabres in circles of light!  
And some of us, all in amaze,  
Who were held for a while from the fight,

## THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE

And were only standing at gaze,  
When the dark-muffled Russian crowd  
Folded its wings from the left and the right,  
And roll'd them around like a cloud,—  
O mad for the charge and the battle  
were we,

When our own good redcoats sank from  
sight,

Like drops of blood in a dark-gray sea,  
And we turn'd to each other, whispering,  
all dismay'd,

'Lost are the gallant three hundred of  
Scarlett's Brigade!'

### IV

'Lost one and all' were the words  
Mutter'd in our dismay;  
But they rode like Victors and Lords  
Thro' the forest of lances and swords  
In the heart of the Russian hordes,  
They rode, or they stood at bay—  
Struck with the sword-hand and slew,  
Down with the bridle-hand drew  
The foe from the saddle and threw  
Underfoot there in the fray—  
Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock  
In the wave of a stormy day;  
Till suddenly shock upon shock  
Stagger'd the mass from without,  
Drove it in wild disarray,  
For our men gallopt up with a cheer and a  
shout,  
And the foeman surged, and waver'd, and  
reel'd  
Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out of  
the field,  
And over the brow and away.

### V

Glory to each and to all, and the charge  
that they made!  
Glory to all the three hundred, and all the  
Brigade!

NOTE.—The 'three hundred' of the 'Heavy  
Brigade' who made this famous charge were  
the Scots Greys and the 2nd squadron of  
Inniskillings; the remainder of the 'Heavy  
Brigade' subsequently dashing up to their sup-  
port.

The 'three' were Scarlett's aide-de-camp,  
Elliot, and the trumpeter and Shegog the  
orderly, who had been close behind him.

## EPILOGUE

### IRENE

NOT this way will you set your name  
A star among the stars.

### POET

What way?

### IRENE

You praise when you should blame  
The barbarism of wars.  
A juster epoch has begun.

### POET

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,  
And that bright hair the modern sun,  
Those eyes the blue to-day,  
You wrong me, passionate little friend.  
I would that wars should cease,  
I would the globe from end to end  
Might sow and reap in peace,  
And some new Spirit o'erbear the old,  
Or Trade re-frain the Powers  
From war with kindly links of gold,  
Or Love with wreaths of flowers.  
Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all  
My friends and brother souls,  
With all the peoples, great and small,  
That wheel between the poles.  
But since, our mortal shadow, Ill  
To waste this earth began—  
Perchance from some abuse of Will  
In worlds before the man  
Involving ours—he needs must fight  
To make true peace his own,  
He needs must combat might with might,  
Or Might would rule alone;  
And who loves War for War's own sake  
Is fool, or crazed, or worse;  
But let the patriot-soldier take  
His meed of fame in verse;  
Nay—tho' that realm were in the wrong  
For which her warriors bleed,  
It still were right to crown with song  
The warrior's noble deed—  
A crown the Singer hopes may last,  
For so the deed endures;  
But Song will vanish in the Vast;  
And that large phrase of yours  
'A Star among the stars,' my dear,  
Is girlish talk at best;



## EPILOGUE

For dare we dally with the sphere  
 As he did half in jest,  
 Old Horace? 'I will strike' said he  
 'The stars with head sublime,'  
 But scarce could see, as now we see,  
 The man in Space and Time,  
 So drew perchance a happier lot  
 Than ours, who rhyme to-day.  
 The fires that arch this dusky dot—  
 Yon myriad-world'd way—  
 The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,  
 World-isles in lonely skies,  
 Whole heavens within themselves, amaze  
 Our brief humanities;  
 And so does Earth; for Homer's fame,  
 Tho' carved in harder stone—  
 The falling drop will make his name  
 As mortal as my own.

IRENE

No!

POET

Let it live then—ay, till when?  
 Earth passes, all is lost  
 In what they prophesy, our wise men,  
 Sun-flame or sunless frost,  
 And deed and song alike are swept  
 Away, and all in vain  
 As far as man can see, except  
 The man himself remain;  
 And tho', in this lean age forlorn,  
 Too many a voice may cry  
 That man can have no after-morn,  
 Not yet of these am I.  
 The man remains, and whatsoe'er  
 He wrought of good or brave  
 Will mould him thro' the cycle-year  
 That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his Art  
 Not all in vain may plead  
 'The song that nerves a nation's heart,  
 Is in itself a deed.'

### TO VIRGIL

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE  
 MANTUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH  
 CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH

I

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest  
 Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,

Ilion falling, Rome arising,  
 wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre;

II

Landscape-lover, lord of language  
 more than he that sang the Works  
 and Days,  
 All the chosen coin of fancy  
 flashing out from many a golden  
 phrase;

III

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,  
 tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and  
 herd;  
 All the charm of all the Muses  
 often flowering in a lonely word;

IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus  
 piping underneath his beechen  
 bowers;  
 Poet of the poet-satyr  
 whom the laughing shepherd bound  
 with flowers;

V

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying  
 in the blissful years again to be,  
 Summers of the snakeless meadow,  
 unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

VI

Thou that seest Universal  
 Nature moved by Universal Mind;  
 Thou majestic in thy sadness  
 at the doubtful doom of human kind;

VII

Light among the vanish'd ages;  
 star that gildest yet this phantom  
 shore;  
 Golden branch amid the shadows,  
 kings and realms that pass to rise no  
 more;

VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,  
 fallen every purple Cæsar's dome—  
 Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm  
 sound for ever of Imperial Rome—

## TO VIRGIL

### IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,  
 and the Rome of freemen holds her  
 place,  
 I, from out the Northern Island  
 sunder'd once from all the human  
 race,

### X

I salute thee, Mantovano,  
 I that loved thee since my day began,  
 Wielder of the stateliest measure  
 ever moulded by the lips of man.

## THE DEAD PROPHET

182-

### I

DEAD!  
 And the Muses cried with a stormy cry  
 'Send them no more, for evermore.  
 Let the people die.'

### II

Dead!  
 'Is it *he* then brought so low?'  
 And a careless people flock'd from the  
 fields  
 With a purse to pay for the show.

### III

Dead, who had served his time,  
 Was one of the people's kings,  
 Had labour'd in lifting them out of slime,  
 And showing them, souls have wings!

### IV

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.  
 His friends had stript him bare,  
 And roll'd his nakedness everyway  
 That all the crowd might stare.

### V

A storm-worn signpost not to be read,  
 And a tree with a moulder'd nest  
 On its barkless bones, stood stark by the  
 dead;  
 And behind him, low in the West,

### VI

With shifting ladders of shadow and light,  
 And blurr'd in colour and form,  
 The sun hung over the gates of Night,  
 And glared at a coming storm.

### VII

Then glided a vulturous Beldam forth,  
 That on dumb death had thriven;  
 They call'd her 'Reverence' here upon  
 earth,  
 And 'The Curse of the Prophet' in  
 Heaven.

### VIII

She knelt—'We worship him'—all but  
 wept—  
 'So great so noble was he!'  
 She clear'd her sight, she arose, she swept  
 The dust of earth from her knee.

### IX

'Great! for he spoke and the people heard,  
 And his eloquence caught like a flame  
 From zone to zone of the world, till his  
 Word  
 Had won him a noble name.

### X

'Noble! he sung, and the sweet sound ran  
 Thro' palace and cottage door,  
 For he touch'd on the whole sad planet of  
 man,  
 The kings and the rich and the poor;

### XI

'And he sung not alone of an old sun set,  
 But a sun coming up in his youth!  
 Great and noble—O yes—but yet—  
 For man is a lover of Truth,

### XII

'And bound to follow, wherever she go  
 Stark-naked, and up or down,  
 Thro' her high hill-passes of stainless snow,  
 Or the foulest sewer of the town—

### XIII

'Noble and great—O ay—but then,  
 Tho' a prophet should have his due,  
 Was he noblier-fashion'd than other men?  
 Shall we see to it, I and you?

## THE DEAD PROPHET

### XIV

'For since he would sit on a Prophet's seat,  
As lord of the Human soul,  
We needs must scan him from head to feet  
Were it but for a wart or a mole?'

### XV

His wife and his child stood by him in tears,  
But she—she push'd them aside.  
'Tho' a name may last for a thousand years,  
Yet a truth is a truth,' she cried.

### XVI

And she that had haunted his pathway still,  
Had often truckled and cower'd  
When he rose in his wrath, and had yielded  
her will  
To the master, as overpower'd,

### XVII

She tumbled his helpless corpse about.  
'Small blemish upon the skin!  
But I think we know what is fair without  
Is often as foul within.'

### XVIII

She crouch'd, she tore him part from part,  
And out of his body she drew  
The red 'Blood-eagle'<sup>1</sup> of liver and heart;  
She held them up to the view;

### XIX

She gabbled, as she groped in the dead,  
And all the people were pleased;  
'See, what a little heart,' she said,  
'And the liver is half-diseased!'

### XX

She tore the Prophet after death,  
And the people paid her well.  
Lightnings flicker'd along the heath;  
One shriek'd 'The fires of Hell!'

## EARLY SPRING

### I

ONCE more the Heavenly Power  
Makes all things new,

<sup>1</sup> Old Viking term for lungs, liver, etc., when torn by the conqueror out of the body of the conquered.

And domes the red-plow'd hills  
With loving blue;  
The blackbirds have their wills,  
The throistles too.

### II

Opens a door in Heaven;  
From skies of glass  
A Jacob's ladder falls  
On greening grass,  
And o'er the mountain-walls  
Young angels pass.

### III

Before them fleets the shower,  
And burst the buds,  
And shine the level lands,  
And flash the floods;  
The stars are from their hands  
Flung thro' the woods,

### IV

The woods with living airs  
How softly fann'd,  
Light airs from where the deep,  
All down the sand,  
Is breathing in his sleep,  
Heard by the land.

### V

O follow, leaping blood,  
The season's lure!  
O heart, look down and up  
Serene, secure,  
Warm as the crocus cup,  
Like snowdrops, pure!

### VI

Past, Future glimpse and fade  
Thro' some slight spell,  
A gleam from yonder vale,  
Some far blue fell,  
And sympathies, how frail,  
In sound and smell!

### VII

Till at thy chuckled note,  
Thou twinkling bird,  
The fairy fancies range,  
And, lightly stirr'd,  
Ring little bells of change  
From word to word.

## EARLY SPRING

### VIII

For now the Heavenly Power  
Makes all things new,  
And thaws the cold, and fills  
The flower with dew;  
The blackbirds have their wills,  
The poets too.

### PREFATORY POEM TO MY BROTHER'S SONNETS

MIDNIGHT, JUNE 30, 1879

#### I

MIDNIGHT—in no midsummer tune  
The breakers lash the shores:  
The cuckoo of a joyless June  
Is calling out of doors:

And thou hast vanish'd from thine own  
To that which looks like rest,  
True brother, only to be known  
By those who love thee best.

#### II

Midnight—and joyless June gone by,  
And from the deluged park  
The cuckoo of a worse July  
Is calling thro' the dark:

But thou art silent underground,  
And o'er thee streams the rain,  
True poet, surely to be found  
When Truth is found again.

#### III

And, now to these unsummer'd skies  
The summer bird is still,  
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries  
From out a phantom hill;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun  
Of sixty years away,  
The light of days when life begun,  
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with thee,  
As all my hopes were thine—  
As all thou wert was one with me,  
May all thou art be mine!

### 'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE'

Row us out from Desenzano, to your  
Sirmione row!  
So they row'd, and there we landed—'O  
venusta Sirmio!'  
There to me thro' all the groves of olive in  
the summer glow,  
There beneath the Roman ruin where the  
purple flowers grow,  
Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the Poet's  
hopeless woe,  
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen-  
hundred years ago,  
'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we wander'd  
to and fro  
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda  
Lake below  
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-  
silvery Sirmio!

### HELEN'S TOWER<sup>1</sup>

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,  
Dominant over sea and land.  
Son's love built me, and I hold  
Mother's love in letter'd gold.  
Love is in and out of time,  
I am mortal stone and lime.  
Would my granite girth were strong  
As either love, to last as long!  
I should wear my crown entire  
To and thro' the Doomsday fire,  
And be found of angel eyes  
In earth's recurring Paradise.

### EPITAPH ON LORD STRAT- FORD DE REDCLIFFE

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THOU third great Canning, stand among  
our best  
And noblest, now thy long day's work  
hath ceased,  
Here silent in our Minster of the West  
Who wert the voice of England in the  
East.

<sup>1</sup> Written at the request of my friend, Lord  
Dufferin.

## EPITAPH ON GENERAL GORDON

### EPITAPH ON GENERAL GORDON

IN THE GORDON BOYS' NATIONAL  
MEMORIAL HOME NEAR WOKING

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, and  
tyrant's foe,  
Now somewhere dead far in the waste  
Soudan,  
Thou livest in all hearts, for all men know  
This earth has never borne a nobler man.

### EPITAPH ON CAXTON

IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER

FIAT LUX (his motto)

THY prayer was 'Light—more Light—  
while Time shall last!'  
Thou sawest a glory growing on the night,  
But not the shadows which that light  
would cast,  
Till shadows vanish in the Light of Light.

### TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL

O PATRIOT Statesman, be thou wise to  
know  
The limits of resistance, and the bounds  
Determining concession; still be bold  
Not only to slight praise but suffer scorn;  
And be thy heart a fortress to maintain  
The day against the moment, and the  
year  
Against the day; thy voice, a music heard  
Thro' all the yells and counter-yells of  
feud  
And faction, and thy will, a power to  
make  
This ever-changing world of circumstance,  
In changing, chime with never-changing  
Law.

### HANDS ALL ROUND

FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn night,  
Then drink to England, every guest;  
That man's the best Cosmopolite  
Who loves his native country best.  
May freedom's oak for ever live  
With stronger life from day to day;

That man's the true Conservative  
Who lops the moulder'd branch away.  
Hands all round!

God the traitor's hope confound!  
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my  
friends,  
And the great name of England, round  
and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long  
To keep our English Empire whole!  
To all our noble sons, the strong  
New England of the Southern Pole!  
To England under Indian skies,  
To those dark millions of her realm!  
To Canada whom we love and prize,  
Whatever statesman hold the helm.

Hands all round!  
God the traitor's hope confound!  
To this great name of England drink, my  
friends,  
And all her glorious empire, round and  
round.

To all our statesmen so they be  
True leaders of the land's desire!  
To both our Houses, may they see  
Beyond the borough and the shire!  
We sail'd wherever ship could sail,  
We founded many a mighty state;  
Pray God our greatness may not fail  
Thro' craven fears of being great.  
Hands all round!  
God the traitor's hope confound!  
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my  
friends,  
And the great name of England, round  
and round.

### FREEDOM

I

O THOU so fair in summers gone,  
While yet thy fresh and virgin soul  
Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,  
The glittering Capitol;

II

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,  
But scarce of such majestic mien  
As here with forehead vapour-swathed  
In meadows ever green;

## FREEDOM

### III

For thou—when Athens reign'd and Rome,  
Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with  
pain  
To mark in many a freeman's home  
The slave, the scourge, the chain;

### IV

O follower of the Vision, still  
In motion to the distant gleam,  
Howe'er blind force and brainless will  
May jar thy golden dream

### V

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,  
Of civic Hate no more to be,  
Of Love to leaven all the mass,  
Till every Soul be free;

### VI

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not mar  
By changes all too fierce and fast  
This order of Her Human Star,  
This heritage of the past;

### VII

O scorner of the party cry  
That wanders from the public good,  
Thou—when the nations rear on high  
Their idol smear'd with blood,

### VIII

And when they roll their idol down—  
Of saner worship sanely proud;  
Thou loather of the lawless crown  
As of the lawless crowd;

### IX

How long thine ever-growing mind  
Hath still'd the blast and strown the  
wave,  
Tho' some of late would raise a wind  
To sing thee to thy grave,

### X

Men loud against all forms of power—  
Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous  
tongues—  
Expecting all things in an hour—  
Brass mouths and iron lungs!

## TO H.R.H. PRINCESS BEATRICE

Two Suns of Love make day of human life,  
Which else with all its pains, and griefs,  
and deaths,  
Were utter darkness—one, the Sun of dawn  
That brightens thro' the Mother's tender  
eyes,  
And warms the child's awakening world—  
and one  
The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,  
Which from her household orbit draws the  
child  
To move in other spheres. The Mother  
weeps  
At that white funeral of the single life,  
Her maiden daughter's marriage; and her  
tears  
Are half of pleasure, half of pain—the child  
Is happy—ev'n in leaving *her*! but Thou,  
True daughter, whose all-faithful, filial  
eyes  
Have seen the loneliness of earthly thrones,  
Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown nor  
let  
This later light of Love have risen in vain,  
But moving thro' the Mother's home,  
between  
The two that love thee, lead a summer life,  
Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to each  
Love,  
Like some conjectured planet in mid  
heaven  
Between two Suns, and drawing down  
from both  
The lighted and genial warmth of double  
day.

## THE FLEET<sup>1</sup>

### I

You, you, *if* you shall fail to understand  
What England is, and what her all-in-  
all,  
On you will come the curse of all the land,  
Should this old England fall  
Which Nelson left so great.

<sup>1</sup> The speaker said that 'he should like to be assured that other outlying portions of the Empire, the Crown colonies, and important coaling stations were being as promptly and as

## THE FLEET

### II

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power on earth,

Our own fair isle, the lord of every sea—  
Her fuller franchise—what would that be worth—

Her ancient fame of Free—  
Were she . . . a fallen state?

### III

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so small,

Her island-myrriads fed from alien lands—

The fleet of England is her all-in-all;

Her fleet is in your hands,  
And in her fleet her Fate.

thoroughly fortified as the various capitals of the self-governing colonies. He was credibly informed this was not so. It was impossible, also, not to feel some degree of anxiety about the efficacy of present provision to defend and protect, by means of swift well-armed cruisers, the immense mercantile fleet of the Empire. A third source of anxiety, so far as the colonies were concerned, was the apparently insufficient provision for the rapid manufacture of armaments and their prompt despatch when ordered to their colonial destination. Hence the necessity for manufacturing appliances equal to the requirements, not of Great Britain alone, but of the whole Empire. But the keystone of the whole was the necessity for an overwhelmingly powerful fleet and efficient defence for all necessary coaling stations. This was as essential for the colonies as for Great Britain. It was the one condition for the continuance of the Empire. All that Continental Powers did with respect to armies England should effect with her navy. It was essentially a defensive force, and could be moved rapidly from point to point, but it should be equal to all that was expected from it. It was to strengthen the fleet that colonists would first readily tax themselves, because they realised how essential a powerful fleet was to the safety, not only of that extensive commerce sailing in every sea, but ultimately to the security of the distant portions of the Empire. Who could estimate the loss involved in even a brief period of disaster to the Imperial Navy? Any amount of money timely expended in preparation would be quite insignificant when compared with the possible calamity he had referred to.'—*Extract from Sir Graham Berry's Speech at the Colonial Institute, 9th November 1886.*

### IV

You, you, that have the ordering of her fleet,

If you should only compass her disgrace,  
When all men starve, the wild mob's million feet

Will kick you from your place,  
But then too late, too late.

## OPENING OF THE INDIAN AND COLONIAL EXHIBITION BY THE QUEEN

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE  
PRINCE OF WALES

### I

WELCOME, welcome with one voice!  
In your welfare we rejoice,  
Sons and brothers that have sent,  
From isle and cape and continent,  
Produce of your field and flood,  
Mount and mine, and primal wood;  
Works of subtle brain and hand,  
And splendours of the morning land,  
Gifts from every British zone;  
Britons, hold your own!

### II

May we find, as ages run,  
The mother featured in the son;  
And may yours for ever be  
That old strength and constancy  
Which has made your fathers great  
In our ancient island State,  
And wherever her flag fly,  
Glorying between sea and sky,  
Makes the might of Britain known;  
Britons, hold your own!

### III

Britain fought her sons of yore—  
Britain fail'd; and never more,  
Careless of our growing kin,  
Shall we sin our fathers' sin,  
Men that in a narrower day—  
Unprophetic rulers they—  
Drove from out the mother's nest  
That young eagle of the West  
To forage for herself alone;  
Britons, hold your own!

## OPENING OF INDIAN AND COLONIAL EXHIBITION

### IV

Sharers of our glorious past,  
Brothers, must we part at last?  
Shall we not thro' good and ill  
Cleave to one another still?  
Britain's myriad voices call,  
'Sons, be welded each and all,  
Into one imperial whole,  
One with Britain, heart and soul!  
One life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne!  
Britons, hold your own!

### POETS AND THEIR BIBLIOGRAPHIES

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier skies,  
Old Virgil who would write ten lines,  
they say,  
At dawn, and lavish all the golden day  
To make them wealthier in his readers'  
eyes;  
And you, old popular Horace, you the wise  
Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd lay,  
And you, that wear a wreath of sweeter  
bay,  
Catullus, whose dead songster never dies;  
If, glancing downward on the kindly  
sphere  
That once had roll'd you round and  
round the Sun,  
You see your Art still shrined in human  
shelves,  
You should be jubilant that you flourish'd  
here

Before the Love of Letters, overdone,  
Had swampt the sacred poets with them-  
selves.

### TO W. C. MACREADY

1851

FAREWELL, Macready, since to-night we  
part;  
Full-handed thunders often have con-  
fessed  
Thy power, well-used to move the  
public breast.  
We thank thee with our voice, and from  
the heart.  
Farewell, Macready, since this night we  
part,  
Go, take thine honours home; rank with  
the best,  
Garrick and statchler Kemble, and the  
rest  
Who made a nation purer through their  
art.  
Thine is it that our drama did not die,  
Nor flicker down to brainless panto-  
mime,  
And those gilt gauds men-children  
swarm to see.  
Farewell, Macready; moral, grave, sub-  
lime;  
Our Shakespeare's bland and universal  
eye  
Dwells pleased, through twice a hundred  
years, on thee.



# QUEEN MARY

## A DRAMA

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

QUEEN MARY.

PHILIP, *King of Naples and Sicily, afterwards King of Spain.*

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

REGINALD POLE, *Cardinal and Papal Legate.*

SIMON RENARD, *Spanish Ambassador.*

LE SIFUR DE NOAILLES, *French Ambassador.*

THOMAS CRANMER, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

SIR NICHOLAS HEATH, *Archbishop of York; Lord Chancellor after Gardiner.*

EDWARD COURTENAY, *Earl of Devon.*

LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, *afterwards Lord Howard, and Lord High Admiral.*

LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME.

LORD PAGE.

LORD PETRE.

STEPHEN GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.*

EDMUND BONNER, *Bishop of London.*

THOMAS THIRLBY, *Bishop of Ely.*

SIR THOMAS WYATT

SIR THOMAS STAFFORD } *Insurrectionary Leaders.*

SIR RALPH BAGENHALL.

SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

SIR WILLIAM CECIL.

SIR THOMAS WHITE, *Lord Mayor of London.*

THE DUKE OF ALVA

THE COUNT DE FERIA } *attending on Philip.*

PETER MARTYR.

FATHER COLL.

FATHER BOURNE.

VILLA GARCIA.

SOTO.

CAPTAIN BRETT

ANTHONY KNYVETT } *Adherents of Wyatt.*

PETERS, *Gentleman of Lord Howard.*

ROGER, *Servant to Noailles.*

WILLIAM, *Servant to Wyatt.*

STEWARD OF HOUSEHOLD to the Princess Elizabeth.

OLD NOKES and NOKES.

MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, *Mother of Courtenay.*

LADY CLARENCE

LADY MAGDALEN DACRES } *Ladies in Waiting to the Queen.*

ALICE

MAID OF HONOUR to the Princess Elizabeth.

JOAN

FRIB } *two Country Wives.*

Lords and other Attendants, Members of the Privy Council, Members of Parliament, two Gentlemen, Aldermen, Citizens, Peasants, Ushers, Messengers, Guards, Pages, Gospellers, Marshalsmen, etc.

## ACT I

### SCENE I

*Alldate richly decorated*

CROWD. MARSHALMEN

*Marshalman.* Stand back, keep a clear lane! When will her Majesty pass, sayst thou? why now, even now; wherefore draw back your heads and your horns before I break them, and make what noise you will with your tongues, so it be not

treason. Long live Queen Mary, the lawful and legitimate daughter of Harry the Eighth! Shout, knaves!

*Citizens.* Long live Queen Mary!

*First Citizen.* That's a hard word, legitimate; what does it mean?

*Second Citizen.* It means a bastard.

*Third Citizen.* Nay, it means true-born. *First Citizen.* Why, didn't the Parliament make her a bastard?

*Second Citizen.* No; it was the Lady Elizabeth.

*Third Citizen.* That was after, man; that was after.

*First Citizen.* Then which is the bastard?

*Second Citizen.* Troth, they be both bastards by Act of Parliament and Council.

*Third Citizen.* Ay, the Parliament can make every true-born man of us a bastard. Old Nokes, can't it make thee a bastard? thou shouldst know, for thou art as white as three Christmasses.

*Old Nokes (dreamily).* Who's a-passing? King Edward or King Richard?

*Third Citizen.* No, old Nokes.

*Old Nokes.* It's Harry!

*Third Citizen.* It's Queen Mary.

*Old Nokes.* The blessed Mary's a-passing!

[Falls on his knees.]

*Nokes.* Let father alone, my masters! he's past your questioning.

*Third Citizen.* Answer thou for him, then! thou'rt no such cockerel thyself, for thou was born i' the tail end of old Harry the Seventh.

*Nokes.* Eh! that was afore bastard-making began. I was born true man at five in the forenoon i' the tail of old Harry, and so they can't make me a bastard.

*Third Citizen.* But if Parliament can make the Queen a bastard, why, it follows all the more that they can make thee one, who art fray'd i' the knees, and out at elbow, and bald o' the back, and bursten at the toes, and down at heels.

*Nokes.* I was born of a true man and a ring'd wife, and I can't argue upon it; but I and my old woman 'ud burn upon it, that would we.

*Marshalman.* What are you cackling of bastardy under the Queen's own nose? I'll have you flogg'd and burnt too, by the Rood I will.

*First Citizen.* He swears by the Rood. Whew!

*Second Citizen.* Hark! the trumpets.

[The Procession passes, MARY and ELIZABETH riding side by side, and disappears under the gate.]

*Citizens.* Long live Queen Mary! down with all traitors! God save her Grace; and death to Northumberland!

[Exeunt.]

#### Manent TWO GENTLEMEN

*First Gentleman.* By God's light a noble creature, right royal!

*Second Gentleman.* She looks comelier than ordinary to-day; but to my mind the Lady Elizabeth is the more noble and royal.

*First Gentleman.* I mean the Lady Elizabeth. Did you hear (I have a daughter in her service who reported it) that she met the Queen at Wanstead with five hundred horse, and the Queen (tho' some say they be much divided) took her hand, call'd her sweet sister, and kiss'd not her alone, but all the ladies of her following.

*Second Gentleman.* Ay, that was in her hour of joy; there will be plenty to sunder and unsister them again: this Gardiner for one, who is to be made Lord Chancellor, and will pounce like a wild beast out of his cage to worry Cranmer.

*First Gentleman.* And furthermore, my daughter said that when there rose a talk of the late rebellion, she spoke even of Northumberland pitifully, and of the good Lady Jane as a poor innocent child who had but obeyed her father; and furthermore, she said that no one in her time should be burnt for heresy.

*Second Gentleman.* Well, sir, I look for happy times.

*First Gentleman.* There is but one thing against them. I know not if you know.

*Second Gentleman.* I suppose you touch upon the rumour that Charles, the master of the world, has offer'd her his son Philip, the Pope and the Devil. I trust it is but a rumour.

*First Gentleman.* She is going now to the Tower to loose the prisoners there, and among them Courtenay, to be made Earl of Devon, of royal blood, of splendid feature, whom the council and all her people wish her to marry. May it be so, for we are many of us Catholics, but few Papists, and the Hot Gospellers will go mad upon it.

*Second Gentleman.* Was she not betroth'd in her babyhood to the Great Emperor himself?

*First Gentleman.* Ay, but he's too old.

*Second Gentleman.* And again to her cousin Reginald Pole, now Cardinal; but I hear that he too is full of aches and broken before his day.

*First Gentleman.* O, the Pope could dispense with his Cardinalate, and his achage, and his breakage, if that were all: will you not follow the procession?

*Second Gentleman.* No; I have seen enough for this day.

*First Gentleman.* Well, I shall follow; if I can get near enough I shall judge with my own eyes whether her Grace incline to this splendid scion of Plantagenet.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

*A Room in Lambeth Palace*

*Cranmer.* To Strasburg, Antwerp, Frankfort, Zurich, Worms, Geneva, Basle—our Bishops from their sees

Or fled, they say, or flying—Poinet, Barlow, Bale, Scory, Coverdale; besides the Deans Of Christchurch, Durham, Exeter, and Wells—

Ailmer and Bullingham, and hundreds more;

So they report: I shall be left alone.

No: Hooper, Ridley, Latimer will not fly.

*Enter PETER MARTYR*

*Peter Martyr.* Fly, Cranmer! were there nothing else, your name Stands first of those who sign'd the Letters Patent

That gave her royal crown to Lady Jane.

*Cranmer.* Stand first it may, but it was written last:

Those that are now her Privy Council, sign'd

Before me: nay, the Judges had pronounced

That our young Edward might bequeath the crown

Of England, putting by his father's will.

Yet I stood out, till Edward sent for me.

The wan boy-king, with his fast-fading eyes

Fixt hard on mine, his frail transparent hand,

Damp with the sweat of death, and griping mine,

Whisper'd me, if I loved him, not to yield His Church of England to the Papal wolf And Mary; then I could no more—I sign'd. Nay, for bare shame of inconsistency, She cannot pass her traitor council by, To make me headless.

*Peter Martyr.* That might be forgiven.

I tell you, fly, my Lord. You do not own The bodily presence in the Eucharist, Their wafer and perpetual sacrifice: Your creed will be your death.

*Cranmer.* Step after step, Thro' many voices crying right and left, Have I climb'd back into the primal church,

And stand within the porch, and Christ with me:

My flight were such a scandal to the faith, The downfall of so many simple souls, I dare not leave my post.

*Peter Martyr.* But you divorced Queen Catharine and her father; hence, her hate Will burn till you are burn'd.

*Cranmer.* I cannot help it. The Canonists and Schoolmen were with me.

'Thou shalt not wed thy brother's wife.' —'Tis written,

'They shall be childless.' True, Mary was born,

But France would not accept her for a bride

As being born from incest; and this wrought

Upon the king; and child by child, you know,

Were momentary sparkles out as quick Almost as kindled; and he brought his doubts

And fears to me. Peter, I'll swear for him He *did* believe the bond incestuous.

But wherefore am I trenching on the time That should already have seen your steps a mile

From me and Lambeth? God be with you! Go.

*Peter Martyr.* Ah, but how fierce a letter  
you wrote against  
Their superstition when they slander'd you  
For setting up a mass at Canterbury  
To please the Queen.

*Cranmer.* It was a wheedling monk  
Set up the mass.

*Peter Martyr.* I know it, my good Lord.  
But you so bubbled over with hot terms  
Of Satan, liars, blasphemy, Antichrist,  
She never will forgive you. Fly, my Lord,  
fly!

*Cranmer.* I wrote it, and God grant me  
power to burn!

*Peter Martyr.* They have given me a  
safe conduct: for all that  
I dare not stay. I fear, I fear, I see you,  
Dear friend, for the last time; farewell, and  
fly.

*Cranmer.* Fly and farewell, and let me  
die the death.

[Exit PETER MARTYR.]

Enter OLD SERVANT

O, kind and gentle master, the Queen's  
Officers

Are here in force to take you to the Tower.

*Cranmer.* Ay, gentle friend, admit them.

I will go.

I thank my God it is too late to fly.

[Exit.]

### SCENE III

#### *St. Paul's Cross*

FATHER BOURNE *in the pulpit.* A crowd.

MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, COURTENAY.

THE SIEUR DE NOAILLES *and his man*

ROGER *in front of the stage.* Hubbub.

*Noailles.* Hast thou let fall those papers  
in the palace?

*Roger.* Ay, sir.

*Noailles.* 'There will be no peace for  
Mary till Elizabeth lose her head.'

*Roger.* Ay, sir.

*Noailles.* And the other, 'Long live Eliza-  
beth the Queen!'

*Roger.* Ay, sir; she needs must tread  
upon them.

*Noailles.*

Well.

These beastly swine make such a grunting  
here,

I cannot catch what Father Bourne is  
saying.

*Roger.* Quiet a moment, my masters;  
hear what the shaveling has to say for  
himself.

*Crowd.* Hush—hear!

*Bourne.* —and so this unhappy land,  
long divided in itself, and sever'd from the  
faith, will return into the one true fold,  
seeing that our gracious Virgin Queen  
hath—

*Crowd.* No pope! no pope!

*Roger* (to those about him, mimicking  
BOURNE). —hath sent for the holy legate of  
the holy father the Pope, Cardinal Pole, to  
give us all that holy absolution which—

*First Citizen.* Old Bourne to the life!

*Second Citizen.* Holy absolution! holy  
Inquisition!

*Third Citizen.* Down with the Papist!

[Hubbub.]

*Bourne.* —and now that your good  
bishop, Bonner, who hath lain so long  
under bonds for the faith— [Hubbub.]

*Noailles.* Friend Roger, steal thou in  
among the crowd,

And get the swine to shout Elizabeth.

Yon gray old Gospeller, sour as midwinter,  
Begin with him.

*Roger* (goes). By the mass, old friend,  
we'll have no pope here while the Lady  
Elizabeth lives.

*Gospeller.* Art thou of the true faith,  
fellow, that swearest by the mass?

*Roger.* Ay, that am I, new converted,  
but the old leaven sticks to my tongue  
yet.

*First Citizen.* He says right; by the mass  
we'll have no mass here.

*Voices of the crowd.* Peace! hear him; let  
his own words damn the Papist. From  
thine own mouth I judge thee—tear him  
down!

*Bourne.* —and since our Gracious Queen,  
let me call her our second Virgin Mary,  
hath begun to re-edify the true temple—

*First Citizen.* Virgin Mary! we'll have  
no virgins here—we'll have the Lady  
Elizabeth!

[*Swords are drawn, a knife is hurled and sticks in the pulpit. The mob throng to the pulpit stairs.*]

*Marchioness of Exeter.* Son Courtenay, wilt thou see the holy father Murdered before thy face? up, son, and save him!

They love thee, and thou canst not come to harm.

*Courtenay (in the pulpit).* Shame, shame, my masters! are you English-born, And set yourselves by hundreds against one?

*Crowd.* A Courtenay! a Courtenay!

[*A train of Spanish servants crosses at the back of the stage.*]

*Noailles.* These birds of passage come before their time:

Stave off the crowd upon the Spaniard there.

*Roger.* My masters, yonder's fatter game for you

Than this old gaping gurgoyne: look you there—

The Prince of Spain coming to wed our Queen!

After him, boys! and pelt him from the city.

[*They seize stones and follow the Spaniards. Exeunt on the other side MARCHIONESS OF EXETER and ATTENDANTS.*]

*Noailles (to ROGER).* Stand from me. If Elizabeth lose her head—

That makes for France.

And if her people, anger'd thereupon, Arise against her and dethrone the Queen—

That makes for France.

And if I breed confusion anyway—

That makes for France.

Good-day, my Lord of Devon; A bold heart yours to beard that raging mob!

*Courtenay.* My mother said, Go up; and up I went.

I knew they would not do me any wrong, For I am mighty popular with them,

*Noailles.*

*Noailles.* You look'd a king.

*Courtenay.* Why not? I am king's blood.

*Noailles.* And in the whirl of change may come to be one.

*Courtenay.* Ah!

*Noailles.* But does your gracious Queen entreat you kinglike?

*Courtenay.* 'Fore God, I think she entreats me like a child.

*Noailles.* You've but a dull life in this maiden court,

I fear, my Lord?

*Courtenay.* A life of nods and yawns.

*Noailles.* So you would honour my poor house to-night,

We might enliven you. Divers honest fellows,

The Duke of Suffolk lately freed from prison,

Sir Peter Carew and Sir Thomas Wyatt,

Sir Thomas Stafford, and some more—we play.

*Courtenay.* At what?

*Noailles.* The Game of Chess.

*Courtenay.* The Game of Chess!

I can play well, and I shall beat you there.

*Noailles.* Ay, but we play with Henry, King of France,

And certain of his court.

His Highness makes his moves across the Channel,

We answer him with ours, and there are messengers

That go between us.

*Courtenay.* Why, such a game, sir, were whole years a playing.

*Noailles.* Nay; not so long I trust. That all depends

Upon the skill and swiftness of the players.

*Courtenay.* The King is skilful at it?

*Noailles.* Very, my Lord.

*Courtenay.* And the stakes high?

*Noailles.* But not beyond your means.

*Courtenay.* Well, I'm the first of players. I shall win.

*Noailles.* With our advice and in our company,

And so you well attend to the king's moves, I think you may.

*Courtenay.* When do you meet?

*Noailles.* To-night.

*Courtenay (aside).* I will be there; the fellow's at his tricks—

## SCENE III

## QUEEN MARY

Deep—I shall fathom him. (*Aloud.*)

Good morning, Noailles.

[*Exit* COURTENAY.]

Noailles. Good-day, my Lord. Strange game of chess! a King

That with her own pawns plays against a Queen,

Whose play is all to find herself a King.

Ay; but this fine blue-blooded Courtenay seems

Too princely for a pawn. Call him a Knight,

That, with an ass's, not a horse's head, Skips every way, from levity or from fear.

Well, we shall use him somehow, so that Gardiner

And Simon Renard spy not out our game Too early. Roger, thinkest thou that any-

one

Suspected thee to be my man?

Roger. Not one, sir.

Noailles. No! the disguise was perfect.

Let's away. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE IV

London. A Room in the Palace

ELIZABETH. *Enter* COURTENAY

Courtenay. So yet am I,

Unless my friends and mirrors lie to me, A goodlier-looking fellow than this Philip. Pah!

The Queen is ill advised: shall I turn traitor?

They've almost talked me into it: yet the word

Affrights me somewhat: to be such a one As Harry Bolingbroke hath a lure in it.

Good now, my Lady Queen, tho' by your age,

And by your looks you are not worth the having,

Yet by your crown you are.

[*Seeing* ELIZABETH.]

The Princess there?

If I tried her and la—she's amorous.

Have we not heard of her in Edward's time,

Her freaks and frolics with the late Lord Admiral?

I do believe she'd yield. I should be still A party in the state; and then, who knows—

Elizabeth. What are you musing on, my Lord of Devon?

Courtenay. Has not the Queen—

Elizabeth. Done what, Sir?

Courtenay. —made you follow

The Lady Suffolk and the Lady Lennox?—

You,

The heir presumptive.

Elizabeth. Why do you ask? you know it.

Courtenay. You needs must bear it hardly.

Elizabeth. No, indeed!

I am utterly submissive to the Queen.

Courtenay. Well, I was musing upon that; the Queen

Is both my foe and yours: we should be friends.

Elizabeth. My Lord, the hatred of another to us

Is not true bond of friendship.

Courtenay. Might it not

Be the rough preface of some closer bond?

Elizabeth. My Lord, you late were loosed from out the Tower,

Where, like a butterfly in a chrysalis, You spent your life; that broken, out you flutter

Thro' the new world, go zigzag, now would settle

Upon this flower, now that; but all things here

At court are known; you have solicited The Queen, and been rejected.

Courtenay. Flower, she!

Half faded! but you, cousin, are fresh and sweet

As the first flower no bee has ever tried.

Elizabeth. Are you the bee to try me? why, but now

I called you butterfly.

Courtenay. You did me wrong,

I love not to be called a butterfly: Why do you call me butterfly?

Elizabeth. Why do you go so gay then?

Courtenay. Velvet and gold.

This dress was made me as the Earl of Devon

To take my seat in; looks it not right royal?

*Elizabeth.* So royal that the Queen forbade you wearing it.

*Courtenay.* I wear it then to spite her.

*Elizabeth.* My Lord, my Lord; I see you in the Tower again. Her Majesty Hears you affect the Prince—prelates kneel to you.—

*Courtenay.* I am the noblest blood in Europe, Madam,

A Courtenay of Devon, and her cousin.

*Elizabeth.* She hears you make your boast that after all

She means to wed you. Folly, my good Lord.

*Courtenay.* How folly? a great party in the state

Wills me to wed her.

*Elizabeth.* Failing her, my Lord, Doth not as great a party in the state

Will you to wed me?

*Courtenay.* Even so, fair lady.

*Elizabeth.* You know to flatter ladies.

*Courtenay.* Nay, I meant

True matters of the heart.

*Elizabeth.* My heart, my Lord, Is no great party in the state as yet.

*Courtenay.* Great, said you? nay, you shall be great. I love you,

Lay my life in your hands. Can you be close?

*Elizabeth.* Can you, my Lord?

*Courtenay.* Close as a miser's casket.

Listen:

The King of France, Noailles the Ambassador,

The Duke of Suffolk and Sir Peter Carew, Sir Thomas Wyatt, I myself, some others, Have sworn this Spanish marriage shall not be.

If Mary will not hear us—well—conjecture—

Were I in Devon with my wedded bride, The people there so worship me—Your ear;

You shall be Queen.

*Elizabeth.* You speak too low, my Lord;

I cannot hear you.

*Courtenay.* I'll repeat it.

*Elizabeth.*

No!

Stand further off, or you may lose your head.

*Courtenay.* I have a head to lose for your sweet sake.

*Elizabeth.* Have you, my Lord? Best keep it for your own.

Nay, pout not, cousin.

Not many friends are mine, except indeed Among the many. I believe you mine;

And so you may continue mine, farewell,

And that at once.

*Enter MARY, behind*

*Mary.* Whispering—leagued together To bar me from my Philip.

*Courtenay.* Pray—consider—

*Elizabeth* (seeing the QUEEN). Well, that's a noble horse of yours, my Lord.

I trust that he will carry you well to-day, And heal your headache.

*Courtenay.* You are wild; what headache?

Heartache, perchance; not headache.

*Elizabeth* (aside to COURTENAY). Are you blind?

[COURTENAY sees the QUEEN and exit.

Exit MARY.

*Enter LORD WILLIAM HOWARD*

*Howard.* Was that my Lord of Devon? do not you

Be seen in corners with my Lord of Devon. He hath fallen out of favour with the Queen.

She fears the Lords may side with you and him

Against her marriage; therefore is he dangerous.

And if this Prince of fluff and feather come To woo you, niece, he is dangerous every-way.

*Elizabeth.* Not very dangerous that way, my good uncle.

*Howard.* But your own state is full of danger here.

The disaffected, heretics, reformers, Look to you as the one to crown their ends.

Mix not yourself with any plot I pray you; Nay, if by chance you hear of any such,

Speak not thereof—no, not to your best friend,

I lest you should be confounded with it.

Stull—

Perinde ac cadaver—as the priest says,  
You know your Latin—quiet as a dead  
body.

What was my Lord of Devon telling you?

*Elizabeth.* Whether he told me anything  
or not,

I follow your good counsel, gracious uncle.  
Quiet as a dead body.

*Howard.* You do right well.

I do not care to know; but this I charge  
you,

Tell Courtenay nothing. The Lord Chan-  
cellor

(I count it as a kind of virtue in him,  
He hath not many), as a mastiff dog  
May love a puppy cur for no more reason  
Than that the twain have been tied up  
together,

Thus Gardiner—for the two were fellow-  
prisoners

So many years in yon accursed Tower—  
Hath taken to this Courtenay. Look to it,  
niece,

He hath no fence when Gardiner questions  
him;

All oozes out; yet him—because they  
know him

The last White Rose, the last Plantagenet  
(Nay, there is Cardinal Pole, too), the  
people

Claim as their natural leader—ay, some  
say,

That you shall marry him, make him King  
belike.

*Elizabeth.* Do they say so, good uncle?

*Howard.* Ay, good niece!

You should be plain and open with me,  
niece.

You should not play upon me.

*Elizabeth.* No, good uncle.

*Enter GARDINER*

*Gardiner.* The Queen would see your  
Grace upon the moment.

*Elizabeth.* Why, my lord Bishop?

*Gardiner.* I think she means to counsel  
your withdrawing

To Ashridge, or some other country house.

*Elizabeth.* Why, my lord Bishop?

*Gardiner.* I do but bring the message,  
know no more.

Your Grace will hear her reasons from  
herself.

*Elizabeth.* 'Tis mine own wish fulfill'd  
before the word

Was spoken, for in truth I had meant to  
crave

Permission of her Highness to retire  
To Ashridge, and pursue my studies there.

*Gardiner.* Madam, to have the wish  
before the word

Is man's good Fairy—and the Queen is  
yours.

I left her with rich jewels in her hand,  
Whereof 'tis like enough she means to  
make

A farewell present to your Grace.

*Elizabeth.* My Lord,  
I have the jewel of a loyal heart.

*Gardiner.* I doubt it not, Madam, most  
loyal. [*Bows low and exit.*]

*Howard.* See,

This comes of parleying with my Lord of  
Devon.

Well, well, you must obey; and I myself  
Believe it will be better for your welfare.

Your time will come.

*Elizabeth.* I think my time will come.

Uncle,  
I am of sovereign nature, that I know,  
Not to be quell'd; and I have felt within me  
Stirrings of some great doom when God's  
just hour

Peals—but this fierce old Gardiner—his  
big baldness,

That irritable forelock which he rubs,  
His buzzard beak and deep-incavern'd eyes  
Half fright me.

*Howard.* You've a bold heart; keep it so.  
He cannot touch you save that you turn  
traitor;

And so take heed I pray you—you are one  
Who love that men should smile upon you,  
niece.

They'd smile you into treason—some of  
them.

*Elizabeth.* I spy the rock beneath the  
smiling sea.

But if this Philip, the proud Catholic  
prince,



And this bald priest, and she that hates me,  
seek

In that lone house, to practise on my life,  
By poison, fire, shot, stab—

*Howard.* They will not, niece.

Mine is the fleet and all the power at sea—  
Or will be in a moment. If they dared  
To harm you, I would blow this Philip  
and all

Your trouble to the dogstar and the devil.  
*Elizabeth.* To the Pleiads, uncle; they  
have lost a sister.

*Howard.* But why say that? what have  
you done to lose her?

Come, come, I will go with you to the  
Queen. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE V

*A Room in the Palace*

MARY with PHILIP'S miniature. ALICE

*Mary (kissing the miniature).* Most  
goodly, Kinglike and an Emperor's  
son,—

A king to be,—is he not noble, girl?

*Alice.* Goodly enough, your Grace, and  
yet, methinks,

I have seen goodlier.

*Mary.* Ay; some waxen doll  
Thy baby eyes have rested on, belike;  
All red and white, the fashion of our land.  
But my good mother came (God rest her  
soul)

Of Spain, and I am Spanish in myself,  
And in my likings.

*Alice.* By your Grace's leave  
Your royal mother came of Spain, but took  
To the English red and white. Your royal  
father

(For so they say) was all pure lily and rose  
In his youth, and like a lady.

*Mary.* O, just God!  
Sweet mother, you had time and cause  
enough

To sicken of his lilies and his roses.

Cast off, betray'd, defamed, divorced, for-  
lorn!

And then the King—that traitor past  
forgiveness,

The false archbishop fawning on him,  
married

The mother of Elizabeth—a heretic  
Ev'n as *she* is; but God hath sent me  
here

To take such order with all heretics  
That it shall be, before I die, as tho'  
My father and my brother had not lived.  
What wast thou saying of this Lady Jane,  
Now in the Tower?

*Alice.* Why, Madam, she was passing  
Some chapel down in Essex, and with her  
Lady Anne Wharton, and the Lady Anne  
Bow'd to the Pyx; but Lady Jane stood up  
Stiff as the very backbone of heresy.

And wherefore bow ye not, says Lady  
Anne,

To him within there who made Heaven  
and Earth?

I cannot, and I dare not, tell your Grace  
What Lady Jane replied.

*Mary.* But I will have it.

*Alice.* She said—pray pardon me, and  
pity her—

She hath harken'd evil counsel—ah! she  
said,

The baker made him.

*Mary.* Monstrous! blasphemous!

She ought to burn. Hence, thou (*Exit*  
ALICE). No—being traitor

Her head will fall: shall it? she is but a  
child.

We do not kill the child for doing that  
His father whipt him into doing—a head  
So full of grace and beauty! would that  
mine

Were half as gracious! O, my lord to be,  
My love, for thy sake only.

I am eleven years older than he is.

But will he care for that?

No, by the holy Virgin, being noble,  
But love me only: then the bastard sprout,  
My sister, is far fairer than myself.

Will he be drawn to her?

No, being of the true faith with myself.

Paget is for him—for to wed with Spain

Would treble England—Gardiner is against  
him;

The Council, people, Parliament against  
him;

But I will have him! My hard father hated  
me;

My brother rather hated me than loved;

My sister cowers and hates me. Holy Virgin,  
Plead with thy blessed Son; grant me my prayer:  
Give me my Philip; and we two will lead  
The living waters of the Faith again  
Back thro' their widow'd channel here,  
and watch  
The parch'd banks rolling incense, as of  
old,  
To heaven, and kindled with the palms of  
Christ!

*Enter USHER*

Who waits, sir?

*Usher.* Madam, the Lord Chancellor.

*Mary.* Bid him come in. (*Enter GARDINER.*) Good morning, my good Lord.

[*Exit USHER.*]

*Gardiner.* That every morning of your Majesty

May be most good, is every morning's prayer

Of your most loyal subject, Stephen Gardiner.

*Mary.* Come you to tell me this, my Lord?

*Gardiner.* And more.

Your people have begun to learn your worth.

Your pious wish to pay King Edward's debts,

Your lavish household curb'd, and the remission

Of half that subsidy levied on the people,  
Make all tongues praise and all hearts beat for you.

I'd have you yet more loved: the realm is poor,

The exchequer at neap-tide: we might withdraw

Part of our garrison at Calais.

*Mary.* Calais!

Our one point on the main, the gate of France!

I am Queen of England; take mine eyes, mine heart,

But do not lose me Calais.

*Gardiner.* Do not fear it.

Of that hereafter. I say your Grace is loved.

That I may keep you thus, who am your friend

And ever faithful counsellor, might I speak?

*Mary.* I can forespeak your speaking.

Would I marry

Prince Philip, if all England hate him? That is

Your question, and I front it with another: Is it England, or a party? Now, your answer.

*Gardiner.* My answer is, I wear beneath my dress

A shirt of mail: my house hath been assaulted,

And when I walk abroad, the populace,  
With fingers pointed like so many daggers,

Stab me in fancy, hissing Spain and Philip;

And when I sleep, a hundred men-at-arms

Guard my poor dreams for England. Men would murder me,

Because they think me favourer of this marriage.

*Mary.* And that were hard upon you, my Lord Chancellor.

*Gardiner.* But our young Earl of Devon—

*Mary.* Earl of Devon?

I freed him from the Tower, placed him at Court;

I made him Earl of Devon, and—the fool—  
He wrecks his health and wealth on courtesans,

And rolls himself in carrion like a dog.

*Gardiner.* More like a school-boy that hath broken bounds,

Sickenning himself with sweets.

*Mary.* I will not hear of him.

Good, then, they will revolt: but I am Tudor,

And shall control them.

*Gardiner.* I will help you, Madam,

Even to the utmost. All the church is grateful.

You have ousted the mock priest, repulped

The shepherd of St. Peter, raised the rood again,

And brought us back the mass. I am all thanks

To God and to your Grace: yet I know well,

Your people, and I go with them so far,  
Will brook nor Pope nor Spaniard here to play

The tyrant, or in commonwealth or church.

*Mary (showing the picture).* Is this the face of one who plays the tyrant?

Peruse it; is it not goodly, ay, and gentle?

*Gardiner.* Madam, methinks a cold face and a haughty.

And when your Highness talks of Courtenay—

Ay, true—a goodly one. I would his life Were half as goodly (*aside*).

*Mary.* What is that you mutter?

*Gardiner.* Oh, Madam, take it bluntly; marry Philip,

And be stepmother of a score of sons!

The prince is known in Spain, in Flanders, ha!

For Philip—

*Mary.* You offend us; you may leave us.

You see thro' warping glasses.

*Gardiner.* If your Majesty—

*Mary.* I have sworn upon the body and blood of Christ

I'll none but Philip.

*Gardiner.* Hath your Grace so sworn?

*Mary.* Ay, Simon Renard knows it.

*Gardiner.* News to me!

It then remains for your poor Gardiner,  
So you still care to trust him somewhat less

Than Simon Renard, to compose the event

In some such form as least may harm your Grace.

*Mary.* I'll have the scandal sounded to the mud.

I know it a scandal.

*Gardiner.* All my hope is now

It may be found a scandal.

*Mary.* You offend us.

*Gardiner (aside).* These princes are like children, must be physick'd,

The bitter in the sweet. I have lost mine office,

It may be, thro' mine honesty, like a fool.

[*Exit.*

*Enter* USHER

*Mary.* Who waits?

*Usher.* The Ambassador from France, your Grace.

*Mary (sits down).* Bid him come in.  
Good morning, Sir de Noailles.

[*Exit* USHER.

*Noailles (entering).* A happy morning to your Majesty.

*Mary.* And I should some time have a happy morning;

I have had none yet. What says the King your Master?

*Noailles.* Madam, my master hears with much alarm,

That you may marry Philip, Prince of Spain—

Foreseeing, with whate'er unwillingness,  
That if this Philip be the titular king  
Of England, and at war with him, your Grace

And kingdom will be suck'd into the war,  
Ay, tho' you long for peace; wherefore, my master,

If but to prove your Majesty's goodwill,  
Would fain have some fresh treaty drawn between you.

*Mary.* Why some fresh treaty? wherefore should I do it?

Sir, if we marry, we shall still maintain  
All former treaties with his Majesty.  
Our royal word for that! and your good master,

Pray God he do not be the first to break them,

Must be content with that; and so, farewell.

*Noailles (going, returns).* I would your answer had been other, Madam,

For I foresee dark days.

*Mary.* And so do I, sir;

Your master works against me in the dark.  
I do believe he help Northumberland

Against me.

*Noailles.* Nay, pure phantasy, your Grace.

Why should he move against you?

*Mary.* Will you hear why?

*Mary* of Scotland,—for I have not own'd  
My sister, and I will not,—after me

Is heir of England; and my royal father,  
To make the crown of Scotland one with  
ours,  
Had mark'd her for my brother Edward's  
bride;  
Ay, but your king stole her a babe from  
Scotland  
In order to betroth her to your Dauphin.  
See then:

Mary of Scotland, married to your  
Dauphin,  
Would make our England, France;  
Mary of England, joining hands with  
Spain,  
Would be too strong for France.  
Yea, were there issue born to her, Spain  
and we,  
One crown, might rule the world. There  
lies your fear.  
That is your drift. You play at hide and  
seek.

Show me your faces!

*Noailles.* Madam, I am amazed:  
French, I must needs wish all good things  
for France.

That must be pardon'd me; but I protest  
Your Grace's policy hath a farther flight  
Than mine into the future. We but seek  
Some settled ground for peace to stand  
upon.

*Mary.* Well, we will leave all this, sir, to  
our council.

Have you seen Philip ever?

*Noailles.* Only once.

*Mary.* Is this like Philip?

*Noailles.* Ay, but nobler-looking.

*Mary.* Hath he the large ability of the  
Emperor?

*Noailles.* No, surely.

*Mary.* I can make allowance for thee,  
Thou speakest of the enemy of thy king.

*Noailles.* Make no allowance for the  
naked truth.

He is every way a lesser man than Charles;  
Stone-hard, ice-cold—no dash of daring  
in him.

*Mary.* If cold, his life is pure.

*Noailles.* Why (*smiling*), no, indeed.

*Mary.* Sayst thou?

*Noailles.* A very wanton life indeed  
(*smiling*).

*Mary.* Your audience is concluded, sir.

[*Exit* NOAILLES.

You cannot

Learn a man's nature from his natural foe.

*Enter* USHER

Who waits?

*Usher.* The Ambassador of Spain, your  
Grace. [*Exit.*

*Enter* SIMON RENARD

*Mary* (*rising to meet him*). Thou art ever  
welcome, Simon Renard. Hast thou  
Brought me the letter which thine Em-  
peror promised  
Long since, a formal offer of the hand  
Of Philip?

*Renard.* Nay, your Grace, it hath not  
reach'd me.

I know not wherefore—some mischance  
of flood,  
And broken bridge, or spavin'd horse, or  
wave

And wind at their old battle: he must have  
written.

*Mary.* But Philip never writes me one  
poor word,  
Which in his absence had been all my  
wealth.

Strange in a wooer!

*Renard.* Yet I know the Prince,  
So your king-parliament suffer him to land,  
Yearns to set foot upon your island shore.

*Mary.* God change the pebble which his  
kingly foot

First presses into some more costly stone  
Than ever blinded eye. I'll have one  
mark it

And bring it me. I'll have it burnish'd  
firelike;

I'll set it round with gold, with pearl, with  
diamond.

Let the great angel of the church come  
with him;

Stand on the deck and spread his wings  
for sail!

God lay the waves and strow the storms at  
sea,

And here at land among the people! O

*Renard,*

I am much beset, I am almost in despair.  
Paget is ours. Gardiner perchance is ours;

But for our heretic Parliament—

*Renard.* O Madam,  
You fly your thoughts like kites. My  
master, Charles,

Bad you go softly with your heretics here,  
Until your throne had ceased to tremble.

Then  
Spit them like larks for aught I care.  
Besides,

When Henry broke the carcase of your  
church

To pieces, there were many wolves among  
you

Who dragg'd the scatter'd limbs into their  
den.

The Pope would have you make them  
render these;

So would your cousin, Cardinal Pole; ill  
counsel!

These let them keep at present; stir not yet  
This matter of the Church lands. At his  
coming

Your star will rise.

*Mary.* My star! a baleful one.  
I see but the black night, and hear the wolf.  
What star?

*Renard.* Your star will be your princely  
son,  
Heir of this England and the Netherlands!  
And if your wolf the while should howl for  
more,

We'll dust him from a bag of Spanish gold.  
I do believe, I have dusted some already,  
That, soon or late, your Parliament is ours.

*Mary.* Why do they talk so foully of  
your Prince,

*Renard?*

*Renard.* The lot of Princes. To sit high  
Is to be lied about.

*Mary.* They call him cold,  
Haughty, ay, worse.

*Renard.* Why, doubtless, Philip shows  
Some of the bearing of your blue blood—  
still

All within measure—nay, it well becomes  
him.

*Mary.* Hath he the large ability of his  
father?

*Renard.* Nay, some believe that he will  
go beyond him.

*Mary.* Is this like him?

*Renard.* Ay, somewhat; but your Philip  
Is the most princelike Prince beneath the  
sun.

This is a daub to Philip.

*Mary.* Of a pure life?

*Renard.* As an angel among angels. Yea,  
by Heaven,

The text—Your Highness knows it, 'Who-  
soever

Looketh after a woman,' would not graze  
The Prince of Spain. You are happy in  
him there,

Chaste as your Grace!

*Mary.* I am happy in him there.

*Renard.* And would be altogether happy,  
Madam,

So that your sister were but look'd to  
closer.

You have sent her from the court, but then  
she goes,

I warrant, not to hear the nightingales,  
But hatch you some new treason in the  
woods.

*Mary.* We have our spies abroad to  
catch her tripping,

And then if caught, to the Tower.

*Renard.* The Tower! the block!  
The word has turn'd your Highness pale;  
the thing

Was no such scarecrow in your father's  
time.

I have heard, the tongue yet quiver'd with  
the jest

When the head leapt—so common! I do  
think

To save your crown that it must come to  
this.

*Mary.* No, Renard; it must never come  
to this.

*Renard.* Not yet; but your old Traitors  
of the Tower—

Why, when you put Northumberland to  
death,

The sentence having past upon them all,  
Spared you the Duke of Suffolk, Guildford  
Dudley,

Ev'n that young girl who dared to wear  
your crown?

*Mary.* Dared? nay, not so; the child  
obey'd her father.

Spite of her tears her father forced it on her.

*Renard.* Good Madam, when the Roman  
wish'd to reign,  
He slew not him alone who wore the  
purple,

But his assessor in the throne, perchance  
A child more innocent than Lady Jane.

*Mary.* I am English Queen, not Roman  
Emperor.

*Renard.* Yet too much mercy is a want  
of mercy,  
And wastes more life. Stamp out the fire,  
or this  
Will smoulder and re-flame, and burn the  
throne  
Where you should sit with Philip: he will  
not come  
Till she be gone.

*Mary.* Indeed, if that were true—  
For Philip comes, one hand in mine, and one  
Steadying the tremulous pillars of the  
Church—

But no, no, no. Farewell. I am somewhat  
faint

With our long talk. Tho' Queen, I am not  
Queen

Of mine own heart, which every now and  
then

Beats me half dead: yet stay, this golden  
chain—

My father on a birthday gave it me,  
And I have broken with my father—take  
And wear it as memorial of a morning  
Which found me full of foolish doubts, and  
leaves me  
As hopeful.

*Renard (aside).* Whew—the folly of all  
follies

Is to be love-sick for a shadow. (*Aloud*)  
Madam,

This chains me to your service, not with  
gold,

But dearest links of love. Farewell, and  
trust me,

Philip is yours. [*Exit.*]

*Mary.* Mine—but not yet all mine.

*Enter USHER*

*Usher.* Your Council is in Session, please  
your Majesty.

*Mary.* Sir, let them sit. I must have time  
to breathe.

No, say I come. (*Exit USHER.*) I won by  
boldness once.

The Emperor counsell'd me to fly to  
Flanders.

I would not; but a hundred miles I rode,  
Sent out my letters, call'd my friends  
together,

Struck home and won.

And when the Council would not crown  
me—thought

To bind me first by oaths I could not keep,  
And keep with Christ and conscience—

was it boldness

Or weakness that won there? when I, their  
Queen,

Cast myself down upon my knees before  
them,

And those hard men brake into woman-  
tears,

Ev'n Gardiner, all amazed, and in that  
passion

Gave me my Crown.

*Enter ALICE*

Girl; hast thou ever heard  
Slanders against Prince Philip in our  
Court?

*Alice.* What slanders? I, your Grace; no,  
never.

*Mary.* Nothing?

*Alice.* Never, your Grace.

*Mary.* See that you neither hear them  
nor repeat!

*Alice (aside).* Good Lord! but I have  
heard a thousand such.

Ay, and repeated them as often—mum!  
Why comes that old fox-Fleming back  
again?

*Enter RENARD*

*Renard.* Madam, I scarce had left your  
Grace's presence

Before I chanced upon the messenger  
Who brings that letter which we waited  
for—

The formal offer of Prince Philip's hand.

It craves an instant answer, Ay or No.

*Mary.* An instant Ay or No! the Council  
sits.

Give it me quick.

*Alice* (stepping before her). Your Highness is all trembling.

*Mary*. Make way.

[Exit into the Council Chamber.]

*Alice*. O, Master Renard, Master Renard, If you have falsely painted your fine Prince; Praised, where you should have blamed him, I pray God

No woman ever love you, Master Renard. It breaks my heart to hear her moan at night

As tho' the nightmare never left her bed.

*Renard*. My pretty maiden, tell me, did you ever

Sigh for a beard?

*Alice*. That's not a pretty question.

*Renard*. Not prettily put? I mean, my pretty maiden,

A pretty man for such a pretty maiden.

*Alice*. My Lord of Devon is a pretty man.

I hate him. Well, but if I have, what then?

*Renard*. Then, pretty maiden, you should know that whether

A wind be warm or cold, it serves to fan A kindled fire.

*Alice*. According to the song.

His friends would praise him, I believed 'em,  
His foes would blame him, and I scorn'd 'em,  
His friends—as Angels I received 'em,  
His foes—the Devil had suborn'd 'em.

*Renard*. Peace, pretty maiden.

I hear them stirring in the Council Chamber.

Lord Paget's 'Ay' is sure—who else? and yet,

They are all too much at odds to close at once

In one full-throated No! Her Highness comes.

Enter MARY

*Alice*. How deathly pale!—a chair, your Highness.

[Bringing one to the QUEEN.]

*Renard*. Madam,

The Council?

*Mary*. Ay! My Philip is all mine.

[Sinks into chair, half fainting.]

ACT II

SCENE I

Alington Castle

*Sir Thomas Wyatt*. I do not hear from Carew or the Duke Of Suffolk, and till then I should not move. The Duke hath gone to Leicester; Carew stirs

In Devon: that fine porcelain Courtenay, Save that he fears he might be crack'd in using,

(I have known a semi-madman in my time

So fancy-ridd'n) should be in Devon too.

Enter WILLIAM

News abroad, William?

*William*. None so new, Sir Thomas, and none so old, Sir Thomas. No new news that Philip comes to wed Mary, no old news that all men hate it. Old Sir Thomas would have hated it. The bells are ringing at Maidstone. Doesn't your worship hear?

*Wyatt*. Ay, for the Saints are come to reign again.

Most like it is a Saint's-day. There's no call

As yet for me; so in this pause, before The mine be fired, it were a pious work To string my father's sonnets, left about Like loosely scatter'd jewels, in fair order, And head them with a lamer rhyme of mine,

To grace his memory.

*William*. Ay, why not, Sir Thomas? He was a fine courtier, he; Queen Anne loved him. All the women loved him. I loved him, I was in Spain with him. I couldn't eat in Spain, I couldn't sleep in Spain. I hate Spain, Sir Thomas.

*Wyatt*. But thou could'st drink in Spain if I remember.

*William*. Sir Thomas, we may grant the wine. Old Sir Thomas always granted the wine.

*Wyatt*. Hand me the casket with my father's sonnets.

*William*. Ay—sonnets—a fine courtier of the old Court, old Sir Thomas. [Exit.]

*Wyatt.* Courtier of many courts, he  
 loved the more  
 His own gray towers, plain life and letter'd  
 peace,  
 To read and rhyme in solitary fields,  
 The lark above, the nightingale below,  
 And answer them in song. The sire begets  
 Not half his likeness in the son. I fail  
 Where he was fullest: yet—to write it  
 down.

[*He writes.*]

*Re-enter WILLIAM*

*William.* There is news, there is news,  
 and no call for sonnet-sorting now, nor for  
 sonnet-making either, but ten thousand  
 men on Penenden Heath all calling after  
 your worship, and your worship's name  
 heard into Maidstone market, and your  
 worship the first man in Kent and Chris-  
 tendom, for the Queen's down, and the  
 world's up, and your worship a-top of it.

*Wyatt.* Inverted Æsop—mountain out  
 of mouse.  
 Say for ten thousand ten—and potherouse  
 knaves,  
 Brain-dizzied with a draught of morning  
 ale.

*Enter ANTHONY KNYVETT*

*William.* Here's Anthony Knyvett.

*Knyvett.* Look you, Master Wyatt,  
 Tear up that woman's work there.

*Wyatt.* No; not these,  
 Dumb children of my father, that will  
 speak

When I and thou and all rebellions lie  
 Dead bodies without voice. Song flies you  
 know  
 For ages.

*Knyvett.* Tut, your sonnet's a flying ant,  
 Wing'd for a moment.

*Wyatt.* Well, for mine own work,  
 [*Tearing the paper.*]

It lies there in six pieces at your feet;  
 For all that I can carry it in my head.

*Knyvett.* If you can carry your head  
 upon your shoulders.

*Wyatt.* I fear you come to carry it off my  
 shoulders,  
 And sonnet-making's safer.

*Knyvett.* Why, good Lord,

Write you as many sonnets as you will.  
 Ay, but not now; what, have you eyes, ears,  
 brains?

This Philip and the black-faced swarms of  
 Spain,

The hardest, cruellest people in the world,  
 Come lousting upon us, eat us up,  
 Confiscate lands, goods, money—Wyatt,  
 Wyatt,

Wake, or the stout old island will become  
 A rotten limb of Spain. They roar for you  
 On Penenden Heath, a thousand of them—  
 more—

All arm'd, waiting a leader; there's no  
 glory

Like his who saves his country: and you sit  
 Sing-singing here; but, if I'm any judge,  
 By God, you are as poor a poet, Wyatt,  
 As a good soldier.

*Wyatt.* You as poor a critic  
 As an honest friend: you stroke me on one  
 cheek,

Buffet the other. Come, you bluster,  
 Anthony!

You know I know all this. I must not move  
 Until I hear from Carew and the Duke.  
 I fear the mine is fired before the time.

*Knyvett (showing a paper).* But here's  
 some Hebrew. Faith, I half forgot it.  
 Look; can you make it English? A strange  
 youth

Suddenly thrust it on me, whisper'd,  
 'Wyatt,'

And whisking round a corner, show'd his  
 back

Before I read his face.

*Wyatt.* Ha! Courtenay's cipher.

[*Reads.*]  
 'Sir Peter Carew fled to France: it is  
 thought the Duke will be taken. I am with  
 you still; but, for appearance sake, stay  
 with the Queen. Gardiner knows, but the  
 Council are all at odds, and the Queen  
 hath no force for resistance. Move, if you  
 move, at once.'

Is Peter Carew fled? Is the Duke taken?  
 Down scabbard, and out sword! and let  
 Rebellion

Roar till throne rock, and crown fall. No;  
 not that;



But we will teach Queen Mary how to reign.

Who are those that shout below there?

*Knyvett.* Why, some fifty  
That follow'd me from Penenden Heath in hope

To hear you speak.

*Wyatt.* Open the window, *Knyvett*;  
The mine is fired, and I will speak to them.

Men of Kent; England of England; you that have kept your old customs upright, while all the rest of England bow'd theirs to the Norman, the cause that hath brought us together is not the cause of a county or a shire, but of this England, in whose crown our Kent is the fairest jewel. Philip shall not wed Mary; and ye have called me to be your leader. I know Spain. I have been there with my father; I have seen them in their own land; have marked the haughtiness of their nobles; the cruelty of their priests. If this man marry our Queen, however the Council and the Commons may fence round his power with restriction, he will be King, King of England, my masters; and the Queen, and the laws, and the people, his slaves. What? shall we have Spain on the throne and in the parliament; Spain in the pulpit and on the law-bench; Spain in all the great offices of state; Spain in our ships, in our forts, in our houses, in our beds?

*Crowd.* No! no! no Spain!

*Wilham.* No Spain in our beds—that were worse than all. I have been there with old Sir Thomas, and the beds I know. I hate Spain.

*A Peasant.* But, Sir Thomas, must we levy war against the Queen's Grace?

*Wyatt.* No, my friend; war for the Queen's Grace—to save her from herself and Philip—war against Spain. And think not we shall be alone—thousands will flock to us. The Council, the Court itself, is on our side. The Lord Chancellor himself is on our side. The King of France is with us; the King of Denmark is with us; the world is with us—war against Spain! And if we move not now, yet it will be known that we have moved; and if Philip come to be

King, O, my God! the rope, the rack, the thumbscrew, the stake, the fire. If we move not now, Spain moves, bribes our nobles with her gold, and creeps, creeps snake-like about our legs till we cannot move at all; and ye know, my masters, that wherever Spain hath ruled she hath wither'd all beneath her. Look at the New World—a paradise made hell; the red man, that good helpless creature, starved, maim'd, flogg'd, flay'd, burn'd, boil'd, buried alive, worried by dogs; and here, nearer home, the Netherlands, Sicily, Naples, Lombardy. I say no more—only this, their lot is yours. Forward to London with me! forward to London! If ye love your liberties or your skins, forward to London!

*Crowd.* Forward to London! A Wyatt!  
a Wyatt!

*Wyatt.* But first to Rochester, to take the guns

From out the vessels lying in the river.  
Then on.

*A Peasant.* Ay, but I fear we be too few,  
Sir Thomas.

*Wyatt.* Not many yet. The world as yet,  
my friend,

Is not half-waked; but every parish tower  
Shall clang and clash alarum as we pass,  
And pour along the land, and swell'n and fed

With indraughts and side-currents, in full  
force

Roll upon London.

*Crowd.* A Wyatt! a Wyatt! Forward!

*Knyvett.* Wyatt, shall we proclaim Elizabeth?

*Wyatt.* I'll think upon it, *Knyvett*.

*Knyvett.* Or Lady Jane?

*Wyatt.* No, poor soul; no.

Ah, gray old castle of Alington, green field  
Beside the brimming Medway, it may  
chance

That I shall never look upon you more.

*Knyvett.* Come, now, you're sonnetting  
again.

*Wyatt.* Not I.

I'll have my head set higher in the state;  
Or—if the Lord God will it—on the stake.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

## Guildhall

SIR THOMAS WHITE (The Lord Mayor),  
LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, SIR RALPH  
BAGENIALL, ALDERMEN and CITIZENS.

*White.* I trust the Queen comes hither  
with her guards.

*Howard.* Ay, all in arms.

[Several of the citizens move hastily  
out of the hall.]

Why do they hurry out there?

*White.* My Lord, cut out the rotten  
from your apple,  
Your apple eats the better. Let them go.  
They go like those old Pharisees in John  
Convicted by their conscience, arrant  
cowards,

Or tamperers with that treason out of Kent.  
When will her Grace be here?

*Howard.* In some few minutes.  
She will address your guilds and com-  
panies.

I have striven in vain to raise a man for her.  
But help her in this exigency, make  
Your city loyal, and be the mightiest man  
This day in England.

*White.* I am Thomas White.  
Few things have fail'd to which I set my  
will.

I do my most and best.

*Howard.* You know that after  
The Captain Brett, who went with your  
train bands

To fight with Wyatt, had gone over to him  
With all his men, the Queen in that distress  
Sent Cornwallis and Hastings to the traitor,  
Feigning to treat with him about her mar-  
riage—

Know too what Wyatt said.

*White.* He'd sooner be,  
While this same marriage question was  
being argued,  
Trusted than trust—the scoundrel—and  
demanded

Possession of her person and the Tower.

*Howard.* And four of her poor Council  
too, my Lord,

As hostages.

*White.* I know it. What do and say

Your Council at this hour?

*Howard.* I will trust you.

We fling ourselves on you, my Lord. The  
Council,

The Parliament as well, are troubled  
waters;

And yet like waters of the fen they know  
not

Which way to flow. All hangs on her  
address,

And upon you, Lord Mayor.

*White.* How look'd the city  
When now you past it? Quiet?

*Howard.* Like our Council,  
Your city is divided. As we past,  
Some hail'd, some hiss'd us. There were  
citizens

Stood each before his shut-up booth, and  
look'd

As grim and grave as from a funeral.

And here a knot of ruffians all in rags,

With execrating execrable eyes,

Glared at the citizen. Here was a young  
mother,

Her face on flame, her red hair all blown  
back,

She shrilling 'Wyatt,' while the boy she  
held

Mimick'd and piped her 'Wyatt,' as red as  
she

In hair and cheek; and almost elbowing  
her,

So close they stood, another, mute as death,  
And white as her own milk; her babe in  
arms

Had felt the faltering of his mother's heart,  
And look'd as bloodless. Here a pious

Catholic,

Mumbling and mixing up in his scared  
prayers

Heaven and earth's Maries; over his bow'd  
shoulder

Scowl'd that world-hated and world-hating  
beast,

A haggard Anabaptist. Many such groups.  
The names of Wyatt, Elizabeth, Courtenay,

Nay the Queen's right to reign—'fore God,  
the rogues—

Were freely buzzed among them. So I say  
Your city is divided, and I fear

One scruple, this or that way, of success

Would turn it thither. Wherefore now the  
Queen

In this low pulse and palsy of the state,  
Bad me to tell you that she counts on you  
And on myself as her two hands; on you,  
In your own city, as her right, my Lord,  
For you are loyal.

*White.* Am I Thomas White?  
One word before she comes. Elizabeth—  
Her name is much abused among these  
traitors.

Where is she? She is loved by all of us.  
I scarce have heart to mingle in this matter,  
If she should be mishandled.

*Howard.* No; she shall not.  
The Queen had written her word to come  
to court:

Methought I smelt out Renard in the letter,  
And fearing for her, sent a secret missive,  
Which told her to be sick. Happily or not,  
It found her sick indeed.

*White.* God send her well;  
Here comes her Royal Grace.

*Enter GUARDS, MARY, and GARDINER. SIR  
THOMAS WHITE leads her to a raised seat  
on the dais.*

*White.* I, the Lord Mayor, and these our  
companies  
And guilds of London, gathered here,  
beseech  
Your Highness to accept our lowliest  
thanks  
For your most princely presence; and we  
pray

That we, your true and loyal citizens,  
From your own royal lips, at once may  
know

The wherefore of this coming, and so learn  
Your royal will, and do it.—I, Lord Mayor  
Of London, and our guilds and companies.

*Mary.* In mine own person am I come  
to you,  
To tell you what indeed ye see and know,  
How traitorously these rebels out of Kent  
Have made strong head against ourselves  
and you.

They would not have me wed the Prince  
of Spain;

That was their pretext—so they spake at  
first—

But we sent divers of our Council to them,  
And by their answers to the question ask'd,  
It doth appear this marriage is the least  
Of all their quarrel.

They have betrayed the treason of their  
hearts:

Seek to possess our person, hold our  
Tower,

Place and displace our councillors, and use  
Both us and them according as they will.

Now what I am ye know right well—your  
Queen;

To whom, when I was wedded to the  
realm

And the realm's laws (the spousal ring  
whereof,

Not ever to be laid aside, I wear  
Upon this finger), ye did promise full  
Allegiance and obedience to the death.

Ye know my father was the rightful heir  
Of England, and his right came down to  
me,

Corroborate by your acts of Parliament:  
And as ye were most loving unto him,  
So doubtless will ye show yourselves to me.  
Wherefore, ye will not brook that anyone  
Should seize our person, occupy our state,  
More specially a traitor so presumptuous  
As this same Wyatt, who hath tamper'd  
with

A public ignorance, and, under colour  
Of such a cause as hath no colour, seeks  
To bend the laws to his own will, and yield  
Full scope to persons rascal and forlorn,  
To make free spoil and havock of your  
goods.

Now as your Prince, I say,  
I, that was never mother, cannot tell  
How mothers love their children; yet,  
methinks,

A prince as naturally may love his people  
As these their children; and be sure your  
Queen

So loves you, and so loving, needs must  
deem

This love by you return'd as heartily;  
And thro' this common knot and bond of  
love,

Doubt not they will be speedily over-  
thrown.

As to this marriage, ye shall understand

We made thoreto no treaty of ourselves,  
And set no foot theretoward unadvised  
Of all our Privy Council; furthermore,  
This marriage had the assent of those to  
whom

The king, my father, did commit his trust;  
Who not alone esteem'd it honourable,  
But for the wealth and glory of our realm,  
And all our loving subjects, most expedient—  
As to myself,

I am not so set on wedlock as to choose  
But where I list, nor yet so amorous  
That I must needs be husbanded; I thank  
God,

I have lived a virgin, and I noway doubt  
But that with God's grace, I can live so  
still.

Yet if it might please God that I should  
leave

Some fruit of mine own body after me,  
To be your king, ye would rejoice thereat,  
And it would be your comfort, as I trust;  
And truly, if I either thought or knew  
This marriage should bring loss or danger  
to you,

My subjects, or impair in any way  
This royal state of England, I would never  
Consent thereto, nor marry while I live;  
Moreover, if this marriage should not  
seem,

Before our own High Court of Parliament,  
To be of rich advantage to our realm,  
We will refrain, and not alone from this,  
Likewise from any other, out of which  
Looms the least chance of peril to our  
realm.

Wherefore be bold, and with your lawful  
Prince

Stand fast against our enemies and yours,  
And fear them not. I fear them not. My  
Lord,

I leave Lord William Howard in your city,  
To guard and keep you whole and safe  
from all

The spoil and sackage aim'd at by these  
rebels,

Who mouth and foam against the Prince  
of Spain.

*Voices.* Long live Queen Mary!

Down with Wyatt!

The Queen!

*White.* Three voices from our guilds and  
companies!

You are shy and proud like Englishmen,  
my masters,

And will not trust your voices. Under-  
stand:

Your lawful Prince hath come to cast  
herself

On loyal hearts and bosoms, hoped to fall  
Into the wide-spread arms of fealty,  
And finds you statues. Speak at once—  
and all!

For whom?

Our sovereign Lady by King Harry's will;  
The Queen of England—or the Kentish  
Squire?

I know you loyal. Speak! in the name of  
God!

The Queen of England or the rabble of  
Kent?

The reeking dungfork master of the mace!  
Your havings wasted by the scythe and  
spade—

Your right and charters hobnail'd into  
slush—

Your houses fired—your gutters bubbling  
blood—

*Acclamation.* No! No! The Queen! the  
Queen!

*White.*

Your Highness hears

This burst and bass of loyal harmony,  
And how we each and all of us abhor  
The venomous, bestial, devilish revolt  
Of Thomas Wyatt. Hear us now make oath  
To raise your Highness thirty thousand  
men,

And arm and strike as with one hand, and  
brush

This Wyatt from our shoulders, like a flea  
That might have leapt upon us unawares.  
Swear with me, noble fellow-citizens, all,  
With all your trades, and guilds, and com-  
panies.

*Citizens.* We swear!

*Mary.* We thank your Lordship and  
your loyal city.

[*Exit MARY attended.*]

*White.* I trust this day, thro' God, I have  
saved the crown.

*First Alderman.* Ay, so my Lord of Pem-  
broke in command

Of all her force be safe; but there are doubts.

*Second Alderman.* I hear that Gardiner, coming with the Queen, And meeting Pembroke, bent to his saddle-bow,

As if to win the man by flattering him.

Is he so safe to fight upon her side?

*First Alderman.* If not, there's no man safe.

*White.* Yes, Thomas White.

I am safe enough; no man need flatter me.

*Second Alderman.* Nay, no man need; but did you mark our Queen?

The colour freely play'd into her face, And the half sight which makes her look so stern,

Seem'd thro' that dim dilated world of hers,

To read our faces; I have never seen her So queenly or so goodly.

*White.* Courage, sir, That makes or man or woman look their goodliest.

Die like the torn fox dumb, but never whine

Like that poor heart, Northumberland, at the block.

*Bagenhall.* The man had children, and he whined for those.

Methinks most men are but poor-hearted, else

Should we so doat on courage, were it commoner?

The Queen stands up, and speaks for her own self;

And all men cry, She is queenly, she is goodly.

Yet she's no goodlier; tho' my Lord Mayor here,

By his own rule, he hath been so bold to-day,

Should look more goodly than the rest of us.

*White.* Goodly? I feel most goodly heart and hand,

And strong to throw ten Wyatts and all Kent.

Ha! ha! sir; but you jest; I love it: a jest In time of danger shows the pulses even.

Be merry! yet, Sir Ralph, you look but sad.

I dare avouch you'd stand up for yourself, Tho' all the world should bay like winter wolves.

*Bagenhall.* Who knows? the man is proven by the hour.

*White.* The man should make the hour, not this the man;

And Thomas White will prove this Thomas Wyatt,

And he will prove an Iden to this Cade, And he will play the Walworth to this Wat;

Come, sirs, we prate; hence all—gather your men—

Myself must bustle. Wyatt comes to Southwark;

I'll have the drawbridge hewn into the Thames,

And see the citizens arm'd. Good day; good day. [*Exit WHITE.*]

*Bagenhall.* One of much outdoor bluster.

*Howard.* For all that, Most honest, brave, and skilful; and his wealth

A fountain of perennial alms—his fault So thoroughly to believe in his own self.

*Bagenhall.* Yet thoroughly to believe in one's own self,

So one's own self be thorough, were to do Great things, my Lord.

*Howard.* It may be.

*Bagenhall.* I have heard One of your Council fleer and jeer at him.

*Howard.* The nursery-cocker'd child will jeer at aught

That may seem strange beyond his nursery. The statesman that shall jeer and fleer at men,

Makes enemies for himself and for his king;

—And if he jeer not seeing the true man Behind his folly, he is thrice the fool;

And if he see the man and still will jeer, He is child and fool, and traitor to the State.

Who is he? let me shun him.

*Bagenhall.* Nay, my Lord, He is damn'd enough already.

*Howard.* I must set The guard at Ludgate. Fare you well, Sir Ralph.

*Bagenhall.* 'Who knows?' I am for England. But who knows,  
That knows the Queen, the Spaniard, and the Pope,  
Whether I be for Wyatt, or the Queen?

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III

*London Bridge*

*Enter SIR THOMAS WYATT and BRETT*

*Wyatt.* Brett, when the Duke of Norfolk moved against us

Thou cried'st 'A Wyatt!' and flying to our side

Left his all bare, for which I love thee, Brett.

Have for thine asking aught that I can give,  
For thro' thine help we are come to London Bridge;

But how to cross it balks me. I fear we cannot.

*Brett.* Nay, hardly, save by boat, swimming, or wings.

*Wyatt.* Last night I climb'd into the gate-house, Brett,

And scared the gray old porter and his wife.  
And then I crept along the gloom and saw  
They had hewn the drawbridge down into the river.

It roll'd as black as death; and that same tide

Which, coming with our coming, seem'd to smile

And sparkle like our fortune as thou saidest,  
Ran sunless down, and moan'd against the piers.

But o'er the chasm I saw Lord William Howard

By torchlight, and his guard; four guns gaped at me,

Black, silent mouths: had Howard spied me there

And made them speak, as well he might have done,

Their voice had left me none to tell you this.

What shall we do?

*Brett.* On somehow. To go back Were to lose all.

*Wyatt.* On over London Bridge  
We cannot: stay we cannot; there is ordnance

On the White Tower and on the Devil's Tower,

And pointed full at Southwark; we must round

By Kingston Bridge.

➔ *Brett.* Ten miles about.

*Wyatt.* Ev'n so.

But I have notice from our partisans  
Within the city that they will stand by us  
If Ludgate can be reach'd by dawn to-morrow.

*Enter one of WYATT'S men*

*Man.* Sir Thomas, I've found this paper; pray your worship read it; I know not my letters; the old priests taught me nothing.

*Wyatt (reads).* 'Whosoever will apprehend the traitor Thomas Wyatt shall have a hundred pounds for reward.'

*Man.* Is that it? That's a big lot of money.

*Wyatt.* Ay, ay, my friend; not read it? 'tis not written

Half plain enough. Give me a piece of paper!

[*Writes 'THOMAS WYATT' large.*  
There, any man can read that.

[*Sticks it in his cap.*

*Brett.* But that's foolhardy.

*Wyatt.* No! boldness, which will give my followers boldness.

*Enter MAN with a prisoner*

*Man.* We found him, your worship, a plundering o' Bishop Winchester's house; he says he's a poor gentleman.

*Wyatt.* Gentleman! a thief! Go hang him. Shall we make

Those that we come to serve our sharpest foes?

*Brett.* Sir Thomas—

*Wyatt.* Hang him, I say.

*Brett.* Wyatt, but now you promised me a boon.

*Wyatt.* Ay, and I warrant this fine fellow's life.

*Brett.* Ev'n so; he was my neighbour once in Kent.

He's poor enough, has drunk and gambled out

All that he had, and gentleman he was. We have been glad together; let him live.

*Wyatt.* He has gambled for his life, and lost, he hangs.

No, no, my word's my word. Take thy poor gentleman!

Gamble thyself at once out of my sight, Or I will dig thee with my dagger. Away! Women and children!

*Enter a CROWD of WOMEN and CHILDREN*

*First Woman.* O Sir Thomas, Sir Thomas, pray you go away, Sir Thomas, or you'll make the White Tower a black 'un for us this blessed day. He'll be the death on us; and you'll set the Devil's Tower a-spitting, and he'll smash all our bits o' things worse than Philip o' Spain.

*Second Woman.* Don't ye now go to think that we be for Philip o' Spain.

*Third Woman.* No, we know that ye be come to kill the Queen, and we'll pray for you all on our bended knees. But o' God's mercy don't ye kill the Queen here, Sir Thomas; look ye, here's little Dickon, and little Robin, and little Jenny—though she's but a side-cousin—and all on our knees, we pray you to kill the Queen further off, Sir Thomas.

*Wyatt.* My friends, I have not come to kill the Queen

Or here or there: I come to save you all, And I'll go further off.

*Crowd.* Thanks, Sir Thomas, we be beholden to you, and we'll pray for you on our bended knees till our lives' end.

*Wyatt.* Be happy, I am your friend. To Kingston, forward! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV

*Room in the Gatehouse of Westminster Palace*

MARY, ALICE, GARDINER, RENARD, LADIES

*Gardiner.* Their cry is, Philip never shall be king.

*Mary.* Lord Pembroke in command of all our force

Will front their cry and shatter them into dust.

*Alice.* Was not Lord Pembroke with Northumberland?

O madam, if this Pembroke should be false?

*Mary.* No, girl; most brave and loyal, brave and loyal.

His breaking with Northumberland broke Northumberland.

At the park gate he hovers with our guards. These Kentish ploughmen cannot break the guards.

*Enter MESSENGER*

*Messenger.* Wyatt, your Grace, hath broken thro' the guards

And gone to Ludgate.

*Gardiner.* Madam, I much fear That all is lost; but we can save your Grace. The river still is free. I do beseech you, There yet is time, take boat and pass to Windsor.

*Mary.* I pass to Windsor and I lose my crown.

*Gardiner.* Pass, then, I pray your Highness, to the Tower.

*Mary.* I shall but be their prisoner in the Tower.

*Cries without.* The traitor! treason! Pembroke!

*Ladies.* Treason! treason!

*Mary.* Peace.

False to Northumberland, is he false to me?

Bear witness, Renard, that I live and die The true and faithful bride of Philip—A sound

Of feet and voices thickening hither—blows—

Hark, there is battle at the palace gates, And I will out upon the gallery.

*Ladies.* No, no, your Grace; see there the arrows flying.

*Mary.* I am Harry's daughter, Tudor, and not Fear.

[*Goes out on the gallery.*]

The guards are all driven in, skulk into corners

Like rabbits to their holes. A gracious guard

Truly; shame on them! they have shut the gates!

*Enter* SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL

*Southwell.* The porter, please your Grace, hath shut the gates  
On friend and foe. Your gentlemen-at-arms,  
If this be not your Grace's order, cry  
To have the gates set wide again, and they  
With their good battleaxes will do you right  
Against all traitors.

*Mary.* They are the flower of England;  
set the gates wide.

*[Exit SOUTHWELL..]*

*Enter* COURTENAY

*Courtenay.* All lost, all lost, all yielded!  
A barge, a barge!  
The Queen must to the Tower.

*Mary.* Whence come you, sir?

*Courtenay.* From Charing Cross; the rebels broke us there,  
And I sped hither with what haste I might  
To save my royal cousin.

*Mary.* Where is Pembroke?

*Courtenay.* I left him somewhere in the thick of it.

*Mary.* Left him and fled; and thou that would'st be King,  
And hast nor heart nor honour. I myself  
Will down into the battle and there bide  
The upshot of my quarrel, or die with those

That are no cowards and no Courtenays.

*Courtenay.* I do not love your Grace  
should call me coward.

*Enter another* MESSENGER

*Messenger.* Over, your Grace, all crush'd;  
the brave Lord William  
Thrust him from Ludgate, and the traitor  
flying  
To Temple Bar, there by Sir Maurice  
Berkeley  
Was taken prisoner.

*Mary.* To the Tower with him!

*Messenger.* 'Tis said he told Sir Maurice  
there was one  
Cognisant of this, and party thereunto,  
My Lord of Devon.

*Mary.* To the Tower with him!

*Courtenay.* O la, the Tower, the Tower,  
always the Tower,  
I shall grow into it—I shall be the  
Tower.

*Mary.* Your Lordship may not have so  
long to wait.

Remove him!

*Courtenay.* La, to whistle out my life,  
And carve my coat upon the walls again!

*[Exit COURTENAY guarded.]*

*Messenger.* Also this Wyatt did confess  
the Princess  
Cognisant thereof, and party thereunto.

*Mary.* What? whom—whom did you  
say?

*Messenger.* Elizabeth,  
Your Royal sister.

*Mary.* To the Tower with her!  
My foes are at my feet and I am Queen.

*[GARDINER and her LADIES kneel to her.  
Gardiner (rising).]* There let them lie,  
your footstool! *(Aside.)* Can I strike  
Elizabeth?—not now and save the life  
Of Devon: if I save him, he and his  
Are bound to me—may strike hereafter.  
*(Aloud.)* Madam,

What Wyatt said, or what they said he  
said,

Cries of the moment and the street—

*Mary.* He said it.

*Gardiner.* Your courts of justice will  
determine that.

*Renard (advancing).* I trust by this your  
Highness will allow

Some spice of wisdom in my telling  
you,

When last we talk'd, that Philip would not  
come

Till Guildford Dudley and the Duke of  
Suffolk,

And Lady Jane had left us.

*Mary.* They shall die.

*Renard.* And your so loving sister?

*Mary.* She shall die.

My foes are at my feet, and Philip King.

*[Exeunt.]*



ACT III

SCENE I

*The Conduit in Gracechurch*

*Painted with the Nine Worthies, among them King Henry VIII holding a book, on it inscribed 'Verbum Dei.'*

*Enter SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and  
SIR THOMAS STAFFORD*

*Bagenhall.* A hundred here and hundreds hang'd in Kent.

The tigress had unsheath'd her nails at last,

And Renard and the Chancellor sharpen'd them.

In every London street a gibbet stood.  
They are down to-day. Here by this house was one;

The traitor husband dangled at the door,  
And when the traitor wife came out for bread

To still the petty treason therewithin,  
Her cap would brush his heels.

*Stafford.* It is Sir Ralph,  
And muttering to himself as heretofore.  
Sir, see you aught up yonder?

*Bagenhall.* I miss something.  
The tree that only bears dead fruit is gone.

*Stafford.* What tree, sir?

*Bagenhall.* Well, the tree  
in Virgil, sir,

That bears not its own apples.

*Stafford.* What! the gallows?

*Bagenhall.* Sir, this dead fruit was ripening overmuch,

And had to be removed lest living Spain  
Should sicken at dead England.

*Stafford.* Not so dead,  
But that a shock may rouse her.

*Bagenhall.* I believe  
Sir Thomas Stafford?

*Stafford.* I am ill disguised.

*Bagenhall.* Well, are you not in peril here?

*Stafford.* I think so.

I came to feel the pulse of England,  
whether

It beats hard at this marriage. Did you see it?

*Bagenhall.* Stafford, I am a sad man and a serious.

Far liefer had I in my country hall  
Been reading some old book, with mine old hound

Couch'd at my hearth, and mine old flask of wine

Beside me, than have seen it: yet I saw it.  
*Stafford.* Good, was it splendid?

*Bagenhall.* Ay, if Dukes, and Earls,  
And Counts, and sixty Spanish cavaliers,  
Some six or seven Bishops, diamonds, pearls,

That royal commonplace too, cloth of gold,  
Could make it so.

*Stafford.* And what was Mary's dress?

*Bagenhall.* Good faith, I was too sorry  
for the woman

To mark the dress. She wore red shoes!

*Stafford.* Red shoes!

*Bagenhall.* Scarlet, as if her feet were  
wash'd in blood,

As if she had waded in it.

*Stafford.* Were your eyes

So bashful that you look'd no higher?

*Bagenhall.* A diamond,

And Philip's gift, as proof of Philip's love,  
Who hath not any for any,—tho' a true one,

Blazed false upon her heart.

*Stafford.* But this proud Prince—

*Bagenhall.* Nay, he is King, you know,  
the King of Naples.

The father ceded Naples, that the son  
Being a King, might wed a Queen—O he  
Flamed in brocade—white satin his trunk-hose,

Inwrought with silver,—on his neck a collar,

Gold, thick with diamonds; hanging down from this

The Golden Fleece—and round his knee, misplaced,

Our English Garter, studded with great emeralds,

Rubies, I know not what. Have you had enough

Of all this gear?

*Stafford.* Ay, since you hate the telling it.  
How look'd the Queen?

*Bagenhall.* No fairer for her jewels.

And I could see that as the new-made couple

Came from the Minster, moving side by side

Beneath one canopy, ever and anon

She cast on him a vassal smile of love,

Which Philip with a glance of some distaste,

Or so methought, return'd. I may be wrong, sir.

This marriage will not hold.

*Stafford.* I think with you.

The King of France will help to break it.

*Bagenhall.* France!

We once had half of France, and hurl'd our battles

Into the heart of Spain; but England now is but a ball chuck'd between France and Spain,

His in whose hand she drops; Harry of Bolingbroke

Had holpen Richard's tottering throne to stand,

Could Harry have foreseen that all our nobles

Would perish on the civil slaughter-field,

And leave the people naked to the crown, And the crown naked to the people; the crown

Female, too! Sir, no woman's regimen

Can save us. We are fallen, and as I think, Never to rise again.

*Stafford.* You are too black-blooded.

I'd make a move myself to hinder that:

I know some lusty fellows there in France.

*Bagenhall.* You would but make us weaker, Thomas Stafford.

Wyatt was a good soldier, yet he fail'd, And strengthen'd Philip.

*Stafford.* Did not his last breath

Clear Courtenay and the Princess from the charge

Of being his co-rebels?

*Bagenhall.* Ay, but then

What such a one as Wyatt says is nothing: We have no men among us. The new Lords

Are quieted with their sop of Abbeylands, And ev'n before the Queen's face Gardiner

buys them

With Philip's gold. All greed, no faith, no courage!

Why, ev'n the haughty prince, Northumberland,

The leader of our Reformation, knelt And blubber'd like a lad, and on the scaffold

Recanted, and resold himself to Rome.

*Stafford.* I swear you do your country wrong, Sir Ralph.

I know a set of exiles over there,

Dare-devils, that would eat fire and spit it out

At Philip's beard: they pillage Spain already.

The French King winks at it. An hour will come

When they will sweep her from the seas. No men?

Did not Lord Suffolk die like a true man?

Is not Lord William Howard a true man?

Yea, you yourself, altho' you are black-blooded:

And I, by God, believe myself a man.

Ay, even in the church there is a man—Cranmer.

Fly would he not, when all men bad him fly.

And what a letter he wrote against the Pope!

There's a brave man, if any.

*Bagenhall.* Ay; if it hold.

*Crowd (coming on).* God save their Graces!

*Stafford.* Bagenhall, I see

The Tudor green and white. (*Trumpets.*)

They are coming now.

And here's a crowd as thick as herring-shoals.

*Bagenhall.* Be limpets to this pillar, or we are torn

Down the strong wave of brawlers.

*Crowd.* God save their Graces!

[*Procession of Trumpeters, Javelin-men, etc.; then Spanish and Flemish Nobles intermingled.*]

*Stafford.* Worth seeing, Bagenhall!

These black dog-Dons

Garb themselves bravely. Who's the long-face there,

Looks very Spain of very Spain?

*Bagenhall.* The Duke

Of Alva, an iron soldier.

*Stafford.* And the Dutchman,  
Now laughing at some jest?

*Bagenhall.* William of Orange,  
William the Silent.

*Stafford.* Why do they call him so?

*Bagenhall.* He keeps, they say, some  
secret that may cost  
Philip his life.

*Stafford.* But then he looks so merry.

*Bagenhall.* I cannot tell you why they  
call him so.

[*The KING and QUEEN pass, attended  
by Peers of the Realm, Officers of  
State, etc. Cannon shot off.*]

*Crowd.* Philip and Mary, Philip and  
Mary!

Long live the King and Queen, Philip and  
Mary!

*Stafford.* They smile as if content with  
one another.

*Bagenhall.* A smile abroad is oft a scowl  
at home.

[*KING and QUEEN pass on. Procession.*]

*First Citizen.* I thought this Philip had  
been one of those black devils of Spain, but  
he hath a yellow beard.

*Second Citizen.* Not red like Iscariot's.

*First Citizen.* Like a carrot's, as thou  
say'st, and English carrot's better than  
Spanish licorice; but I thought he was a  
beast.

*Third Citizen.* Certain I had heard that  
every Spaniard carries a tail like a devil  
under his trunk-hose.

*Taylor.* Ay, but see what trunk-hoses!  
Lord! they be fine; I never stitch'd none  
such. They make amends for the tails.

*Fourth Citizen.* Tut! every Spanish  
priest will tell you that all English heretics  
have tails.

*Fifth Citizen.* Death and the Devil—if  
he find I have one—

*Fourth Citizen.* Lo! thou hast call'd them  
up! here they come—a pale horse for  
Death and Gardiner for the Devil.

*Enter GARDINER (turning back from the  
procession)*

*Gardiner.* Knave, wilt thou wear thy  
cap before the Queen?

*Man.* My Lord, I stand so squeezed  
among the crowd

I cannot lift my hands unto my head.

*Gardiner.* Knock off his cap there, some  
of you about him!

See there be others that can use their  
hands.

Thou art one of Wyatt's men?

*Man.* No, my Lord, no.

*Gardiner.* Thy name, thou knave?

*Man.* I am nobody, my Lord.

*Gardiner (shouting).* God's passion!  
knave, thy name?

*Man.* I have ears to hear.

*Gardiner.* Ay, rascal, if I leave thee ears  
to hear.

Find out his name and bring it me (*to  
Attendant*).

*Attendant.* Ay, my Lord.

*Gardiner.* Knave, thou shalt lose thine  
ears and find thy tongue,  
And shalt be thankful if I leave thee that.

[*Coming before the Conduit.*]  
The conduit painted—the nine worthies  
—ay!

But then what's here? King Harry with a  
scroll.

Ha—*Verbum Dei*—verbum—word of  
God!

God's passion! do you know the knave  
that painted it?

*Attendant.* I do, my Lord.

*Gardiner.* Tell him to paint it out,  
And put some fresh device in lieu of it—  
A pair of gloves, a pair of gloves, sir; ha?  
There is no heresy there.

*Attendant.* I will, my Lord;  
The man shall paint a pair of gloves. I am  
sure

(Knowing the man) he wrought it  
ignorantly,  
And not from any malice.

*Gardiner.* Word of God  
In English! over this the brainless loons  
That cannot spell *Esaïas* from St. Paul,  
Make themselves drunk and mad, fly out  
and flare

Into rebellions. I'll have their bibles burnt.  
The bible is the priest's. Ay! fellow, what!  
Stand staring at me! shout, you gaping  
rogue!

*Man.* I have, my Lord, shouted till I am hoarse.  
*Gardiner.* What hast thou shouted, knave?  
*Man.* Long live Queen Mary!  
*Gardiner.* Knave, there be two. There be both King and Queen, Philip and Mary. Shout!  
*Man.* Nay, but, my Lord,  
The Queen comes first, Mary and Philip.  
*Gardiner.* Shout, then, Mary and Philip!  
*Man.* Mary and Philip!  
*Gardiner.* Now, Thou hast shouted for thy pleasure, shout for mine!  
Philip and Mary!  
*Man.* Must it be so, my Lord?  
*Gardiner.* Ay, knave.  
*Man.* Philip and Mary!  
*Gardiner.* I distrust thee. Thine is a half voice and a lean assent. What is thy name?  
*Man.* Sanders.  
*Gardiner.* What else?  
*Man.* Zerubbabel.  
*Gardiner.* Where dost thou live?  
*Man.* In Cornhill.  
*Gardiner.* Where, knave, where?  
*Man.* Sign of the Talbot.  
*Gardiner.* Come to me to-morrow.—Rascal!—this land is like a hill of fire, One crater opens when another shuts. But so I get the laws against the heretic, Spite of Lord Paget and Lord William Howard, And others of our Parliament, revived, I will show fire on my side—stake and fire—Sharp work and short. The knaves are easily cow'd. Follow their Majesties.  
*[Exit. The crowd following.]*  
*Bagenhall.* As proud as Becket.  
*Stafford.* You would not have him murder'd as Becket was?  
*Bagenhall.* No—murder fathers murder: but I say There is no man—there was one woman with us— It was a sin to love her married, dead

I cannot choose but love her.  
*Stafford.* Lady Jane?  
*Crowd (going off).* God save their Graces!  
*Stafford.* Did you see her die?  
*Bagenhall.* No, no; her innocent blood had blinded me.  
You call me too black-blooded—true enough  
Her dark dead blood is in my heart with mine  
If ever I cry out against the Pope  
Her dark dead blood that ever moves with mine  
Will stir the living tongue and make the cry.  
*Stafford.* Yet doubtless you can tell me how she died?  
*Bagenhall.* Seventeen—and knew eight languages—in music  
Peerless—her needle perfect, and her learning  
Beyond the churchmen; yet so meek, so modest,  
So wife-like humble to the trivial boy  
Mismatch'd with her for policy! I have heard  
She would not take a last farewell of him, She fear'd it might unman him for his end. She could not be unmann'd—no, nor out-woman'd—  
Seventeen—a rose of grace!  
Girl never breathed to rival such a rose; Rose never blew that equal'd such a bud.  
*Stafford.* Pray you go on.  
*Bagenhall.* She came upon the scaffold, And said she was condemn'd to die for treason;  
She had but follow'd the device of those Her nearest kin: she thought they knew the laws.  
But for herself, she knew but little law, And nothing of the titles to the crown; She had no desire for that, and wrung her hands,  
And trusted God would save her thro' the blood  
Of Jesus Christ alone.  
*Stafford.* Pray you go on.  
*Bagenhall.* Then knelt and said the Miserere Mei—  
But all in English, mark you; rose again,

And, when the headsman pray'd to be forgiven,  
Said 'You will give me my true crown at last,  
But do it quickly;' then all wept but she,  
Who changed not colour when she saw the block,  
But ask'd him, childlike: 'Will you take it off  
Before I lay me down?' 'No, madam,' he said,  
Gasping; and when her innocent eyes were bound,  
She, with her poor blind hands feeling—  
'where is it?'  
Where is it?'—You must fancy that which follow'd,  
If you have heart to do it!  
*Crowd (in the distance).* God save their Graces!  
*Stafford.* Their Graces, our disgraces! God confound them!  
Why, she's grown bloodier! when I last was here,  
This was against her conscience—would be murder!  
*Bagenhall.* The 'Thou shalt do no murder,' which God's hand  
Wrote on her conscience, Mary rubb'd out pale—  
She could not make it white—and over that,  
Traced in the blackest text of Hell—'Thou shalt!'  
And sign'd it—Mary!  
*Stafford.* Philip and the Pope  
Must have sign'd too. I hear this Legate's coming  
To bring us absolution from the Pope.  
The Lords and Commons will bow down before him—  
You are of the house? what will you do, Sir Ralph?  
*Bagenhall.* And why should I be bolder than the rest,  
Or honestest than all?  
*Stafford.* But, sir, if I—  
And oversea they say this state of yours  
Hath no more mortice than a tower of cards;  
And that a puff would do it—then if I

And others made that move I touch'd upon,  
Back'd by the power of France, and landing here,  
Came with a sudden splendour, shout, and show,  
And dazzled men and deafen'd by some bright  
Loud venture, and the people so unquiet—  
And I the race of murder'd Buckingham—  
Not for myself, but for the kingdom—Sir,  
I trust that you would fight along with us.  
*Bagenhall.* No; you would fling your lives into the gulf.  
*Stafford.* But if this Philip, as he's like to do,  
Left Mary a wife-widow here alone,  
Set up a viceroy, sent his myriads hither  
To seize upon the forts and fleet, and make us  
A Spanish province; would you not fight then?  
*Bagenhall.* I think I should fight then.  
*Stafford.* I am sure of it.  
Hist! there's the face coming on here of one  
Who knows me. I must leave you. Fare you well,  
You'll hear of me again.  
*Bagenhall.* Upon the scaffold.  
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

*Room in Whitehall Palace*

MARY. *Enter* PHILIP and CARDINAL POLE  
*Pole.* Ave Maria, gratia plena, Benedicta tu in mulieribus.  
*Mary.* Loyal and royal cousin, humblest thanks.  
Had you a pleasant voyage up the river?  
*Pole.* We had your royal barge, and that same chair,  
Or rather throne of purple, on the deck.  
Our silver cross sparkled before the prow,  
The ripples twinkled at their diamond-dance,  
The boats that follow'd, were as glowing-gay  
As regal gardens; and your flocks of swans,

As fair and white as angels; and your shores  
Wore in mine eyes the green of Paradise.  
My foreign friends, who dream'd us blanketed

In ever-closing fog, were much amazed  
'To find as fair a sun as might have flash'd  
Upon their lake of Garda, fire the Thames;  
Our voyage by sea was all but miracle;  
And here the river flowing from the sea,  
Not toward it (for they thought not of our tides),

Seem'd as a happy miracle to make glide—  
In quiet—home your banish'd countryman.

*Mary.* We heard that you were sick in Flanders, cousin.

*Pole.* A dizziness.

*Mary.* And how came you round again?

*Pole.* The scarlet thread of Rahab saved her life;

And mine, a little letting of the blood.

*Mary.* Well? now?

*Pole.* Ay, cousin, as the heathen giant

Had but to touch the ground, his force return'd—

Thus, after twenty years of banishment,  
Feeling my native land beneath my foot,  
I said thereto: 'Ah, native land of mine,  
Thou art much beholden to this foot of mine,

That hastes with full commission from the Pope

To absolve thee from thy guilt of heresy.  
Thou hast disgraced me and attainted me,  
And mark'd me ev'n as Cain, and I return  
As Peter, but to bless thee: make me well.'  
Methinks the good land heard me, for to-day

My heart beats twenty, when I see you, cousin.

Ah, gentle cousin, since your Herod's death,

How oft hath Peter knock'd at Mary's gate!  
And Mary would have risen and let him in,  
But, Mary, there were those within the house

Who would not have it.

*Mary.* True, good cousin Pole;

And there were also those without the house

Who would not have it.

*Pole.* I believe so, cousin.

State-policy and church-policy are con-joint,

But Janus-faces looking diverse ways.

I fear the Emperor much misvalued me.

But all is well; 'twas ev'n the will of God,  
Who, waiting till the time had ripen'd, now,

Makes me his mouth of holy greeting.

'Hail,

Daughter of God, and saver of the faith.

Sit benedictus fructus ventris tui!

*Mary.* Ah, heaven!

*Pole.* Unwell, your Grace?

*Mary.* No, cousin, happy—

Happy to see you; never yet so happy

Since I was crown'd.

*Pole.* Sweet cousin, you forget

That long low minster where you gave your hand

To this great Catholic King.

*Philip.* Well said, Lord Legate.

*Mary.* Nay, not well said; I thought of you, my liege,

Ev'n as I spoke.

*Philip.* Ay, Madam; my Lord Paget

Waits to present our Council to the Legate.

Sit down here, all; Madam, between us

you.  
*Pole.* Lo, now you are enclosed with boards of cedar,

Our little sister of the Song of Songs!

You are doubly fenced and shielded sitting here

Between the two most high-set thrones on earth,

The Emperor's highness happily symbol'd by

The King your husband, the Pope's Holiness

By mine own self.

*Mary.* True, cousin, I am happy.

When will you that we summon both our houses

To take this absolution from your lips,  
And be regather'd to the Papal fold?

*Pole.* In Britain's calendar the brightest day

Beheld our rough forefathers break their  
Gods,  
And clasp the faith in Christ; but after that  
Might not St. Andrew's be her happiest  
day?

*Mary.* Then these shall meet upon St.  
Andrew's day.

*Enter PAGET, who presents the Council.  
Dumb show*

*Pole.* I am an old man wearied with my  
journey,  
Ev'n with my joy. Permit me to withdraw.  
To Lambeth?

*Philip.* Ay, Lambeth has ousted  
Cranmer.

It was not meet the heretic swine should  
live  
In Lambeth.

*Mary.* There or anywhere, or at all.

*Philip.* We have had it swept and  
garnish'd after him.

*Pole.* Not for the seven devils to enter  
in?

*Philip.* No, for we trust they parted in  
the swine.

*Pole.* True, and I am the Angel of the  
Pope.

Farewell, your Graces.

*Philip.* Nay, not here—to me;  
I will go with you to the waterside.

*Pole.* Not be my Charon to the counter  
side?

*Philip.* No, my Lord Legate, the Lord  
Chancellor goes.

*Pole.* And unto no dead world; but  
Lambeth palace,  
Henceforth a centre of the living faith.

[*Exeunt PHILIP, POLE, PAGET, etc.*]

*Manet MARY*

*Mary.* He hath awaked! he hath awaked!  
He stirs within the darkness!  
Oh, Philip, husband! now thy love to mine  
Will cling more close, and those bleak  
manners thaw,  
That make me shamed and tongue-tied in  
my love.

The second Prince of Peace—  
The great unborn defender of the Faith,  
Who will avenge me of mine enemies—

He comes, and my star rises.  
The stormy Wyatts and Northumberlands,  
The proud ambitions of Elizabeth,  
And all her fiercest partisans—are pale  
Before my star!  
The light of this new learning wanes and  
dies:

The ghosts of Luther and Zuinglius fade  
Into the deathless hell which is their doom  
Before my star!  
His sceptre shall go forth from Ind to Ind!  
His sword shall hew the heretic peoples  
down!  
His faith shall clothe the world that will  
be his,  
Like universal air and sunshine! Open,  
Ye everlasting gates! The King is here!—  
My star, my son!

*Enter PHILIP, DUKE OF ALVA, etc.*

Oh, Philip, come with me;  
Good news have I to tell you, news to  
make

Both of us happy—ay, the Kingdom too.  
Nay come with me—one moment!

*Philip (to ALVA).* More than that:  
There was one here of late—William the  
Silent

They call him—he is free enough in talk,  
But tells me nothing. You will be, we trust,  
Sometime the viceroy of those provinces—  
He must deserve his surname better.

*Alva.* Ay, sir;  
Inherit the Great Silence.

*Philip.* True; the provinces  
Are hard to rule and must be hardly ruled;  
Most fruitful, yet, indeed, an empty rind,  
All hollow'd out with stinging heresies;  
And for their heresies, Alva, they will fight;  
You must break them or they break you.

*Alva (proudly).* The first.  
*Philip.* Good!

Well, Madam, this new happiness of mine?  
[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter THREE PAGES*

*First Page.* News, mates! a miracle, a  
miracle! news!  
The bells must ring; Te Deums must be  
sung;

The Queen hath felt the motion of her babe!

*Second Page.* Ay; but see here!

*First Page.* See what?

*Second Page.* This paper, Dickon. I found it fluttering at the palace gates:—"The Queen of England is delivered of a dead dog!"

*Third Page.* These are the things that madden her. Fie upon it!

*First Page.* Ay; but I hear she hath a dropsy, lad,

Or a high-dropsy, as the doctors call it.

*Third Page.* Fie on her dropsy, so she have a dropsy!

I know that she was ever sweet to me.

*First Page.* For thou and thine are Roman to the core.

*Third Page.* So thou and thine must be. Take heed!

*First Page.* Not I,  
And whether this flash of news be false or true,

So the wine run, and there be revelry,  
Content am I. Let all the steeples clash,  
Till the sun dance, as upon Easter Day.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III

*Great Hall in Whitehall*

*At the far end a dais. On this three chairs, two under one canopy for MARY and PHILIP, another on the right of these for POLE. Under the dais on POLE'S side, ranged along the wall, sit all the Spiritual Peers, and along the wall opposite, all the Temporal. The Commons on cross benches in front, a line of approach to the dais between them. In the foreground, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and other MEMBERS OF THE COMMONS.*

*First Member.* St. Andrew's day; sit close, sit close, we are friends.  
Is reconciled the word? the Pope again?  
It must be thus; and yet, cocksbody! how strange

That Gardiner, once so one with all of us  
Against this foreign marriage, should have yielded

So utterly!—strange! but stranger still that he,

So fierce against the Headship of the Pope,  
Should play the second actor in this pageant  
That brings him in; such aameleon he!

*Second Member.* This Gardiner turn'd his coat in Henry's time;

The serpent that hath slough'd will slough again.

*Third Member.* Tut, then we all are serpents.

*Second Member.* Speak for yourself.

*Third Member.* Ay, and for Gardiner! being English citizen,

How should he bear a bridegroom out of Spain?

The Queen would have him! being English churchman

How should he bear the headship of the Pope?

The Queen would have it! Statesmen that are wise

Shape a necessity, as a sculptor clay,  
To their own model.

*Second Member.* Statesmen that are wise  
Take truth herself for model. What say you?

[*To SIR RALPH BAGENHALL.*]

*Bagenhall.* We talk and talk.

*First Member.* Ay, and what use to talk?  
Philip's no sudden alien—the Queen's husband,

He's here, and king, or will be—yet cocksbody!

So hated here! I watch'd a hive of late;  
My seven-years' friend was with me, my young boy;

Out crept a wasp, with half the swarm behind.

'Philip!' says he. I had to cuff the rogue  
For infant treason.

*Third Member.* But they say that bees,  
If any creeping life invade their hive  
Too gross to be thrust out, will build him round,

And bind him in from harming of their combs.

And Philip by these articles is bound  
From stirring hand or foot to wrong the realm.

*Second Member.* By bonds of beeswax,  
like your creeping thing;



But your wise bees had stung him first to death.

*Third Member.* Hush, hush!

You wrong the Chancellor: the clauses added

To that same treaty which the emperor sent us

Were mainly Gardiner's: that no foreigner Hold office in the household, fleet, forts, army;

That if the Queen should die without a child,

The bond between the kingdoms be dissolved;

That Philip should not mix us any way

With his French wars—

*Second Member.* Ay, ay, but what security,

Good sir, for this, if Philip—

*Third Member.* Peace—the Queen, Philip, and Pole. [*All rise, and stand.*]

*Enter MARY, PHILIP, and POLE*

[*GARDINER conducts them to the three chairs of state. PHILIP sits on the QUEEN'S left, POLE on her right.*]

*Gardiner.* Our short-lived sun, before his winter plunge,  
Laughs at the last red leaf, and Andrew's Day.

*Mary.* Should not this day be held in after years

More solemn than of old?

*Philip.* Madam, my wish Echoes your Majesty's.

*Pole.* It shall be so.

*Gardiner.* Mine echoes both your Graces'; (*aside*) but the Pope—

Can we not have the Catholic church as well

Without as with the Italian? if we cannot, Why then the Pope.

My lords of the upper house,  
And ye, my masters, of the lower house,  
Do ye stand fast by that which ye resolved?

*Voices.* Do.

*Gardiner.* And be you all one mind to supplicate

The Legate here for pardon, and acknowledge

The primacy of the Pope?

*Voices.* We are all one mind.

*Gardiner.* Then must I play the vassal to this Pole. [*Aside.*]

[*He draws a paper from under his robes and presents it to the KING and QUEEN, who look through it and return it to him; then ascends a tribune, and reads.*]

We, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal,  
And Commons here in Parliament assembled,

Presenting the whole body of this realm Of England, and dominions of the same,  
Do make most humble suit unto your Majesties,

In our own name and that of all the state,  
That by your gracious means and intercession

Our supplication be exhibited

To the Lord Cardinal Pole, sent here as Legate

From our most Holy Father Julius, Pope,  
And from the Apostolic see of Rome;  
And do declare our penitence and grief  
For our long schism and disobedience,  
Either in making laws and ordinances  
Against the Holy Father's primacy,  
Or else by doing or by speaking aught  
Which might impugn or prejudice the same;

By this our supplication promising,  
As well for our own selves as all the realm,  
That now we be and ever shall be quick,  
Under and with your Majesties' authorities,  
To do to the utmost all that in us lies  
Towards the abrogation and repeal  
Of all such laws and ordinances made;  
Whereon we humbly pray your Majesties,  
As persons undefiled with our offence,  
So to set forth this humble suit of ours  
That we the rather by your intercession,  
May from the Apostolic see obtain,  
Thro' this most reverend Father, absolute-  
tion,

And full release from danger of all censures  
Of Holy Church that we be fall'n into,  
So that we may, as children penitent,  
Be once again received into the bosom  
And unity of Universal Church;  
And that this noble realm thro' after years  
May in this unity and obedience

Unto the holy see and reigning Pope  
Serve God and both your Majesties.

*Voices.* Amen. [*All sit.*

[*He again presents the petition to the KING and QUEEN, who hand it reverentially to POLE.*

*Pole (sitting).* This is the loveliest day  
that ever smiled

On England. All her breath should,  
incenselike,

Rise to the heavens in grateful praise of  
Him

Who now recalls her to His ancient fold.  
Lo! once again God to this realm hath  
given

A token of His more especial Grace;  
For as this people were the first of all  
The islands call'd into the dawning church  
Out of the dead, deep night of heathendom,  
So now are these the first whom God hath  
given

Grace to repent and sorrow for their  
schism;

And if your penitence be not mockery,  
Oh how the blessed angels who rejoice  
Over one saved do triumph at this hour  
In the reborn salvation of a land  
So noble. [*A pause.*

For ourselves we do protest  
That our commission is to heal, not harm;  
We come not to condemn, but reconcile;  
We come not to compel, but call again;  
We come not to destroy, but edify;  
Nor yet to question things already done;  
These are forgiven—matters of the past—  
And range with jetsam and with offal  
thrown

Into the blind sea of forgetfulness.

[*A pause.*  
Ye have reversed the attainder laid on us  
By him who sack'd the house of God; and  
we,

Amplier than any field on our poor earth  
Can render thanks in fruit for being sown,  
Do here and now repay you sixty-fold,  
A hundred, yea, a thousand thousand-fold,  
With heaven for earth.

[*Rising and stretching forth his hands.*  
*All kneel but SIR RALPH BAGENHALL,*  
*who rises and remains standing.*

The Lord who hath redeem'd us

With His own blood, and wash'd us from  
our sins,

To purchase for Himself a stainless bride;  
He, whom the Father hath appointed Head  
Of all his church, He by His mercy absolve  
you! [*A pause.*

And we by that authority Apostolic  
Given unto us, his Legate, by the Pope,  
Our Lord and Holy Father, Julius,  
God's Vicar and Vicegerent upon earth,  
Do here absolve you and deliver you  
And every one of you, and all the realm  
And its dominions from all heresy,  
All schism, and from all and every censure,  
Judgment, and pain accruing thereupon;  
And also we restore you to the bosom  
And unity of Universal Church.

[*Turning to GARDINER.*  
Our letters of commission will declare this  
plainlier.

[*QUEEN heard sobbing. Cries of Amen!*  
*Amen! Some of the MEMBERS embrace one another. All but SIR RALPH BAGENHALL pass out into the neighbouring chapel, whence is heard the Te Deum.*

*Bagenhall.* We strove against the papacy  
from the first,  
In William's time, in our first Edward's  
time,

And in my master Henry's time; but now,  
The unity of Universal Church,  
Mary would have it; and this Gardiner  
follows;

The unity of Universal Hell,  
Philip would have it; and this Gardiner  
follows!

A Parliament of imitative apes!  
Sheep at the gap which Gardiner takes,  
who not  
Believes the Pope, nor any of them  
believe—

These spaniel-Spaniard English of the  
time,  
Who rub their fawning noses in the dust,  
For that is Philip's gold-dust, and adore  
This Vicar of their Vicar. Would I had been  
Born Spaniard! I had held my head up  
then.

I am ashamed that I am Bagenhall,  
English.

*Enter OFFICER*

*Officer.* Sir Ralph Bagenhall!

*Bagenhall.* What of that?

*Officer.* You were the one sole man in either house  
Who stood upright when both the houses fell.

*Bagenhall.* The houses fell!

*Officer.* I mean the houses knelt  
Before the Legate.

*Bagenhall.* Do not scrimp your phrase,  
But stretch it wider; say when England fell.

*Officer.* I say you were the one sole man who stood.

*Bagenhall.* I am the one sole man in either house,  
Perchance in England, loves her like a son.

*Officer.* Well, you one man, because you stood upright,  
Her Grace the Queen commands you to the Tower.

*Bagenhall.* As traitor, or as heretic, or for what?

*Officer.* If any man in any way would be  
The one man, he shall be so to his cost.

*Bagenhall.* What! will she have my head?

*Officer.* A round fine likelier.  
Your pardon. [*Calling to Attendant.*  
By the river to the Tower. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV

*Whitehall. A Room in the Palace*

MARY, GARDINER, POLE, PAGET,  
BONNER, etc.

*Mary.* The King and I, my Lords, now that all traitors  
Against our royal state have lost the heads  
Wherewith they plotted in their treasonous malice,

Have talk'd together, and are well agreed  
That those old statutes touching Lollardism  
To bring the heretic to the stake, should be  
No longer a dead letter, but requicken'd.

*One of the Council.* Why, what hath fluster'd Gardiner? how he rubs  
His forelock!

*Paget.* I have changed a word with him  
In coming, and may change a word again.

*Gardiner.* Madam, your Highness is our sun, the King

And you together our two suns in one;  
And so the beams of both may shine upon us,

The faith that seem'd to droop will feel your light,

Lift head, and flourish; yet not light alone,  
There must be heat—there must be heat enough

To scorch and wither heresy to the root.  
For what saith Christ? 'Compel them to come in.'

And what saith Paul? 'I would they were cut off'

That trouble you.' Let the dead letter live!  
Trace it in fire, that all the louts to whom

Their ABC is darkness, clowns and grooms  
May read it! so you quash rebellion too,  
For heretic and traitor are all one:

Two vipers of one breed—an amphisbæna,  
Each end a sting: Let the dead letter burn!

*Paget.* Yet there be some disloyal Catholics,

And many heretics loyal; heretic throats  
Cried no God-bless-her to the Lady Jane,  
But shouted in Queen Mary. So there be  
Some traitor-heretic, there is axe and cord.  
To take the lives of others that are loyal,  
And by the churchman's pitiless doom of fire,

Were but a thankless policy in the crown,  
Ay, and against itself; for there are many.

*Mary.* If we could burn out heresy, my Lord Paget,  
We reck not tho' we lost this crown of England—

Ay! tho' it were ten Englands!

*Gardiner.* Right, your Grace.  
*Paget,* you are all for this poor life of ours,  
And care but little for the life to be.

*Paget.* I have some time, for curiousness, my Lord,  
Watch'd children playing at *their* life to be,  
And cruel at it, killing helpless flies;  
Such is our time—all times for aught I know.

*Gardiner.* We kill the heretics that sting the soul—

They, with right reason, flies that prick the flesh.

*Paget.* They had not reach'd right reason; little children!  
They kill'd but for their pleasure and the power  
They felt in killing.

*Gardiner.* A spice of Satan, ha!  
Why, good! what then? granted!—we are fallen creatures;  
Look to your Bible, *Paget!* we are fallen.

*Paget.* I am but of the laity, my Lord Bishop,  
And may not read your Bible, yet I found  
One day, a wholesome scripture, 'Little children,  
Love one another.'

*Gardiner.* Did you find a scripture,  
'I come not to bring peace but a sword'?  
The sword

Is in her Grace's hand to smite with. *Paget,*  
You stand up here to fight for heresy,  
You are more than guess'd at as a heretic,  
And on the steep-up track of the true faith  
Your lapses are far seen.

*Paget.* The faultless *Gardiner!*

*Mary.* You brawl beyond the question;  
speak, Lord Legate!

*Pole.* Indeed, I cannot follow with your  
Grace:

Rather would say—the shepherd doth not  
kill

The sheep that wander from his flock, but  
sends

His careful dog to bring them to the fold.  
Look to the Netherlands, wherein have  
been

Such holocausts of heresy! to what end?

For yet the faith is not established there.

*Gardiner.* The end's not come.

*Pole.* No—nor this way  
will come,

Seeing there lie two ways to every end,  
A better and a worse—the worse is here  
To persecute, because to persecute  
Makes a faith hated, and is furthermore  
No perfect witness of a perfect faith  
In him who persecutes: when men are tost  
On tides of strange opinion, and not sure  
Of their own selves, they are wroth with  
their own selves,

And thence with others; then who lights  
the faggot?

Not the full faith, no, but the lurking  
doubt.

Old Rome, that first made martyrs in the  
Church,

Trembled for her own gods, for these were  
trembling—

But when did our Rome tremble?

*Paget.*

Did she not

in Henry's time and Edward's?

*Pole.*

What, my Lord!

The Church on Peter's rock? never! I have  
seen

A pine in Italy that cast its shadow

Arthwart a cataract; firm stood the pine—

The cataract shook the shadow. To my  
mind,

The cataract typed the headlong plunge  
and fall

Of heresy to the pit: the pine was Rome.  
You see, my Lords,

It was the shadow of the Church that  
trembled;

Your church was but the shadow of a  
church,

Wanting the Papal mitre.

*Gardiner* (*muttering*). Here be tropes.

*Pole.* And tropes are good to clothe a  
naked truth,

And make it look more seemly.

*Gardiner.*

Tropes again!

*Pole.* You are hard to please. Then with-  
out tropes, my Lord,

An overmuch severcness, I repeat,

When faith is wavering makes the waverer  
pass

Into more settled hatred of the doctrines

Of those who rule, which hatred by and by  
Involves the ruler (thus there springs to

light

That Centaur of a monstrous Common-  
weal,

The traitor-heretic) then tho' some may  
quail,

Yet others are that dare the stake and fire,  
And their strong torment bravely borne,  
begets

An admiration and an indignation,

And hot desire to imitate; so the plague

Of schism spreads; were there but three or  
four

Of these misleaders, yet I would not say

Burn! and we cannot burn whole towns;  
they are many,  
As my Lord Paget says.

*Gardiner.* Yet my Lord Cardinal—  
*Pole.* I am your Legate; please you let  
me finish.

Methinks that under our Queen's regimen  
We might go softlier than with crimson  
rowel

And streaming lash. When Herod-Henry  
first

Began to batter at your English Church,  
This was the cause, and hence the judg-  
ment on her.

She seethed with such adulteries, and the  
lives

Of many among your churchmen were so  
foul

That heaven wept and earth blush'd. I  
would advise

That we should thoroughly cleanse the  
Church within

Before these bitter statutes be requicken'd.  
So after that when she once more is seen

White as the light, the spotless bride of  
Christ,

Like Christ himself on Tabor, possibly  
The Lutheran may be won to her again;  
Till when, my Lords, I counsel tolerance.

*Gardiner.* What, if a mad dog bit your  
hand, my Lord,

Would you not chop the bitten finger  
off,

Lest your whole body should madden with  
the poison?

I would not, were I Queen, tolerate the  
heretic,

No, not an hour. The ruler of a land  
Is bounden by his power and place to see  
His people be not poison'd. Tolerate  
them!

Why? do they tolerate you? Nay, many of  
them

Would burn—have burnt each other; call  
they not

The one true faith, a loathsome idol-  
worship?

Beware, Lord Legate, of a heavier crime  
Than heresy is itself; beware, I say,

Lest men accuse you of indifference  
To all faiths, all religion; for you know

Right well that you yourself have been  
supposed

Tainted with Lutheranism in Italy.

*Pole (angered).* But you, my Lord,  
beyond all supposition,

In clear and open day were congruent  
With that vile Cranmer in the accursed lie  
Of good Queen Catharine's divorce—the  
spring

Of all those evils that have flow'd upon us;  
For you yourself have truckled to the  
tyrant,

And done your best to bastardise our  
Queen,

For which God's righteous judgment fell  
upon you

In your five years of imprisonment, my  
Lord,

Under young Edward. Who so bolster'd up  
The gross King's headship of the Church,  
or more

Denied the Holy Father!

*Gardiner.* Ha! what! eh?

But you, my Lord, a polish'd gentleman,  
A bookman, flying from the heat and tussle,  
You lived among your vines and oranges,  
In your soft Italy yonder! You were sent  
for,

You were appeal'd to, but you still pre-  
ferr'd

Your learned leisure. As for what I did  
I suffer'd and repented. You, Lord Legate  
And Cardinal-Deacon, have not now to  
learn

That ev'n St. Peter in his time of fear  
Denied his Master, ay, and thrice, my  
Lord.

*Pole.* But not for five-and-twenty years,  
my Lord.

*Gardiner.* Ha! good! it seems then I was  
summon'd hither

But to be mock'd and baited. Speak, friend  
Bonner,

And tell this learned Legate he lacks zeal.  
The Church's evil is not as the King's,  
Cannot be heal'd by stroking. The mad  
bite

Must have the cautery—tell him—and at  
once.

What would'st thou do hadst thou his  
power, thou

That layest so long in heretic bonds with me;

Would'st thou not burn and blast them root and branch?

*Bonner.* Ay, after you, my Lord.

*Gardiner.* Nay, God's passion, before me! speak!

*Bonner.* I am on fire until I see them flame.

*Gardiner.* Ay, the psalm-singing weavers, cobblers, scum—

But this most noble prince Plantagenet,  
Our good Queen's cousin—dallying over seas

Even when his brother's, nay, his noble mother's,

Head fell—

*Pole.* Peace, madman!

Thou stirrest up a grief thou canst not fathom.

Thou Christian Bishop, thou Lord Chancellor

Of England! no more rein upon thine anger

Than any child! Thou mak'st me much ashamed

That I was for a moment wroth at thee.

*Mary.* I come for counsel and ye give me feuds,

Like dogs that set to watch their master's gate,

Fall, when the thief is ev'n within the walls,

To worrying one another. My Lord Chancellor,

You have an old trick of offending us;

And but that you are art and part with us  
In purging heresy, well we might, for this

Your violence and much roughness to the Legate,

Have shut you from our counsels. Cousin Pole,

You are fresh from brighter lands. Retire with me.

His Highness and myself (so you allow us)  
Will let you learn in peace and privacy

What power this cooler sun of England hath

In breeding godless vermin. And pray Heaven

That you may see according to our sight.  
Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt* QUEEN and POLE, etc.]

*Gardiner.* Pole has the Plantagenet face,  
But not the force made them our mightiest kings.

Fine eyes—but melancholy, irresolute—  
A fine beard, Bonner, a very full fine beard.

But a weak mouth, an indeterminate—ha?

*Bonner.* Well, a weak mouth, perchance.

*Gardiner.* And not like thine

To gorge a heretic whole, roasted or raw.

*Bonner.* I'd do my best, my Lord; but yet the Legate

Is here as Pope and Master of the Church,  
And if he go not with you—

*Gardiner.* Tut, Master Bishop,  
Our bashful Legate, saw'st not how he flush'd?

Touch him upon his old heretical talk,  
He'll burn a diocese to prove his orthodoxy.

And let him call me truckler. In those times,

Thou knowest we had to dodge, or duck, or die;

I kept my head for use of Holy Church;  
And see you, we shall have to dodge again,

And let the Pope trample our rights, and plunge

His foreign fist into our island Church

To plump the leaner pouch of Italy.

For a time, for a time.

Why? that these statutes may be put in force,

And that his fan may thoroughly purge his floor.

*Bonner.* So then you hold the Pope—

*Gardiner.* I hold the Pope!  
What do I hold him? what do I hold the Pope?

Come, come, the morsel stuck—this Cardinal's fault—

I have gulpt it down. I am wholly for the Pope,

Utterly and altogether for the Pope,  
The Eternal Peter of the changeless chair,

Crown'd slave of slaves, and mitred king of kings,

God upon earth! what more? what would you have?

Hence, let's be gone.

SCENE V

Woodstock

*Enter USHER*

*Usher.* Well that you be not gone,  
My Lord. The Queen, most wroth at first  
with you,  
Is now content to grant you full forgive-  
ness,  
So that you crave full pardon of the Legate.  
I am sent to fetch you.

*Gardiner.* Doth Pole yield, sir, ha!

Did you hear 'em? were you by?

*Usher.* I cannot tell you,  
His bearing is so courtly-delicate;  
And yet methinks he falters: their two  
Graces

Do so dear-cousin and royal-cousin him,  
So press on him the duty which as Legate  
He owes himself, and with such royal  
smiles—

*Gardiner.* Smiles that burn men. Bonner,  
it will be carried.

He falters, ha? 'fore God, we change and  
change;

Men now are bow'd and old, the doctors  
tell you,  
At three-score years; then if we change at  
all

We needs must do it quickly; it is an age  
Of brief life, and brief purpose, and brief  
patience,

As I have shown to-day. I am sorry for it  
If Pole be like to turn. Our old friend  
Cranmer,

Your more especial love, hath turn'd so  
often,

He knows not where he stands, which, if  
this pass,

We two shall have to teach him; let 'em  
look to it,

Cranmer and Hooper, Ridley and Latimer,  
Rogers and Ferrar, for their time is come,  
Their hour is hard at hand, their 'dies  
Ire,'

'Their 'dies Illa,' which will test their sect.  
I feel it but a duty—you will find in it  
Pleasure as well as duty, worthy Bonner,—  
To test their sect. Sir, I attend the Queen  
To crave most humble pardon—of her  
most

Royal, Infallible, Papal Legate-cousin.

*[Exeunt.]*

ELIZABETH, LADY IN WAITING

*Elizabeth.* So they have sent poor  
Courtney over sea.

*Lady.* And banish'd us to Woodstock,  
and the fields.

The colours of our Queen are green and  
white,

These fields are only green, they make me  
gape.

*Elizabeth.* There's whitethorn, girl.

*Lady.* Ay, for an hour in May.  
But court is always May, buds out in  
masques,

Breaks into feather'd merriments, and  
flowers

In silken pageants. Why do they keep us  
here?

Why still suspect your Grace?

*Elizabeth.* Hard upon both.

*[Writes on the window with a diamond.]*

Much suspected, of me  
Nothing proven can be.  
Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.

*Lady.* What hath your Highness written?

*Elizabeth.* A true rhyme.

*Lady.* Cut with a diamond; so to last  
like truth.

*Elizabeth.* Ay, if truth last.

*Lady.* But truth, they say, will out,  
So it must last. It is not like a word,  
That comes and goes in uttering.

*Elizabeth.* Truth, a word!  
The very Truth and very Word are one.  
But truth of story, which I glanced at, girl,  
Is like a word that comes from olden days,  
And passes thro' the peoples: every tongue  
Alters it passing, till it spells and speaks  
Quite other than at first.

*Lady.* I do not follow.

*Elizabeth.* How many names in the long  
sweep of time

That so foreshortens greatness, may but  
hang

On the chance mention of some fool that  
once

Brake bread with us, perhaps: and my poor  
chronicle

Is but of glass. Sir Henry Bedingfield  
May split it for a spite.

*Lady.* God grant it last,  
And witness to your Grace's innocence,  
Till doomsday melt it.

*Elizabeth.* Or a second fire,  
Like that which lately crackled underfoot  
And in this very chamber, fuse the glass,  
And char us back again into the dust  
We spring from. Never peacock against  
rain

Scream'd as you did for water.

*Lady.* And I got it.  
I woke Sir Henry—and he's true to you—  
I read his honest horror in his eyes.

*Elizabeth.* Or true to his?

*Lady.* Sir Henry Bedingfield!  
I will have no man true to me, your Grace,  
But one that pares his nails; to me? the  
clown!

*Elizabeth.* Out, girl! you wrong a noble  
gentleman.

*Lady.* For, like his cloak, his manners  
want the nap

And gloss of court; but of this fire he says,  
Nay swears, it was no wicked wilfulness,  
Only a natural chance.

*Elizabeth.* A chance—perchance  
One of those wicked wilfuls that men make,  
Nor shame to call it nature. Nay, I know  
They hunt my blood. Save for my daily  
range

Among the pleasant fields of Holy Writ  
I might despair. But there hath some one  
come;

The house is all in movement. Hence, and  
see. [Exit LADY.]

*Milkmaid (singing without)*

Shame upon you, Robin,  
Shame upon you now!  
Kiss me would you? with my hands  
Milking the cow?  
Daisies grow again,  
Kingcups blow again,  
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.  
Robin came behind me,  
Kiss'd me well I vow;  
Cuff him could I? with my hands  
Milking the cow?  
Swallows fly again,  
Cuckoos cry again,  
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.

Come, Robin, Robin,  
Come and kiss me now;  
Help it can I? with my hands  
Milking the cow?  
Ringdoves coo again,  
All things woo again.

Come behind and kiss me milking the cow!

*Elizabeth.* Right honest and red-check'd;

Robin was violent,  
And she was crafty—a sweet violence,  
And a sweet craft. I would I were a milk-  
maid,

To sing, love, marry, churn, brew, bake,  
and die,  
Then have my simple headstone by the  
church,

And all things lived and ended honestly.  
I could not if I would. I am Harry's  
daughter:

Gardiner would have my head. They are  
not sweet,  
The violence and the craft that do divide  
The world of nature; what is weak must  
lie;

The lion needs but roar to guard his young;  
The lapwing lies, says 'here' when they  
are there.

Threaten the child; 'I'll scourge you if  
you did it.'

What weapon hath the child, save his soft  
tongue,

To say 'I did not?' and my rod's the block.  
I never lay my head upon the pillow  
But that I think, 'Wilt thou lie there  
tomorrow?'

How oft the falling axe, that never fell,  
Hath shock'd me back into the daylight  
truth

That it may fall to-day! Those damp,  
black, dead

Nights in the Tower; dead—with the fear  
of death

Too dead ev'n for a death-watch! Toll of  
a bell,

Stroke of a clock, the scurrying of a rat  
Affrighted me, and then delighted me,  
For there was life—And there was life in  
death—

The little murder'd princes, in a pale light,  
Rose hand in hand, and whisper'd, 'come  
away!



The civil wars are gone for evermore:  
Thou last of all the Tudors, come away!  
With us is peace!' The last? It was a  
dream;

I must not dream, not wink, but watch.

She has gone,

Maid Marian to her Robin—by and by  
Both happy! a fox may filch a hen by night,  
And make a morning outcry in the yard;  
But there's no Renard here to 'catch her  
tripping.'

Catch me who can; yet, sometimes I have  
wish'd

That I were caught, and kill'd away at  
once

Out of the flutter. The gray rogue,  
Gardiner,

Went on his knees, and pray'd me to  
confess

In Wyatt's business, and to cast myself  
Upon the good Queen's mercy; ay, when,  
my Lord?

God save the Queen! My jailor—

*Enter* SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD

*Bedingfield.* One, whose bolts,  
That jail you from free life, bar you from  
death.

There haunt some Papist ruffians here—  
about

Would murder you.

*Elizabeth.* I thank you heartily, sir,  
But I am royal, tho' your prisoner,  
And God hath blest or cursed me with a  
nose—

Your boots are from the horses.

*Bedingfield.* Ay, my Lady.  
When next there comes a missive from the  
Queen

It shall be all my study for one hour  
To rose and lavender my horsiness,  
Before I dare to glance upon your Grace.

*Elizabeth.* A missive from the Queen:  
last time she wrote,  
I had like to have lost my life: it takes my  
breath:

O God, sir, do you look upon your boots,  
Are you so small a man? Help me: what  
think you,

Is it life or death?

*Bedingfield.* I thought not on my boots;

The devil take all boots were ever made  
Since man went barefoot. See, I lay it here,  
For I will come no nearer to your Grace;  
*[Laying down the letter.]*

And, whether it brings you bitter news or  
sweet,

And God hath given your Grace a nose,  
or not,

I'll help you, if I may.

*Elizabeth.* Your pardon, then;  
It is the heat and narrowness of the cage  
That makes the captive testy; with free  
wing

The world were all one Araby. Leave me  
now,

Will you, companion to myself, sir?

*Bedingfield.* Will I?  
With most exceeding willingness, I will;  
You know I never come till I be call'd.

*[Exit.]*

*Elizabeth.* It lies there folded: is there  
venom in it?

A snake—and if I touch it, it may sting.  
Come, come, the worst!

Best wisdom is to know the worst at once.

*[Reads:]*

'It is the King's wish, that you should  
wed Prince Philibert of Savoy. You are to  
come to Court on the instant; and think  
of this in your coming.

'MARY THE QUEEN.'

Think! I have many thoughts;  
I think there may be birdlime here for me;  
I think they fain would have me from the  
realm;

I think the Queen may never bear a child;  
I think that I may be some time the  
Queen,

Then, Queen indeed: no foreign prince or  
priest

Should fill my throne, myself upon the  
steps.

I think I will not marry anyone,  
Specially not this landless Philibert  
Of Savoy; but, if Philip menace me,  
I think that I will play with Philibert,—  
As once the Holy Father did with mine,  
Before my father married my good  
mother,—

For fear of Spain.

*Enter LADY*

*Lady.* O Lord! your Grace, your Grace,  
I feel so happy: it seems that we shall fly  
These bald, blank fields, and dance into  
the sun  
That shines on princes.

*Elizabeth.* Yet, a moment since,  
I wish'd myself the milkmaid singing here,  
To kiss and cuff among the birds and  
flowers—

A right rough life and healthful.

*Lady.* But the wench  
Hath her own troubles; she is weeping  
now;

For the wrong Robin took her at her word.  
Then the cow kick'd, and all her milk was  
spilt.

Your Highness such a milkmaid?

*Elizabeth.* I had kept  
My Robins and my cows in sweeter order  
Had I been such.

*Lady (slyly).* And had your Grace a  
Robin?

*Elizabeth.* Come, come, you are chill  
here; you want the sun  
That shines at court; make ready for the  
journey.

Pray God, we 'scape the sunstroke. Ready  
at once. *[Exeunt.]*

## SCENE VI

*London. A Room in the Palace*

LORD PETRE and LORD WILLIAM HOWARD

*Petre.* You cannot see the Queen. Renard  
denied her,  
Ev'n now to me.

*Howard.* Their Flemish go-between  
And all-in-all. I came to thank her Majesty  
For freeing my friend Bagenhall from the  
Tower;

A grace to me! Mercy, that herb-of-grace,  
Flowers now but seldom.

*Petre.* Only now perhaps.  
Because the Queen hath been three days  
in tears

For Philip's going—like the wild hedge-  
rose

Of a soft winter, possible, not probable,

However you have prov'n it.

*Howard.* I must see her.

*Enter RENARD*

*Renard.* My Lords, you cannot see her  
Majesty.

*Howard.* Why then the King! for I  
would have him bring it

Home to the leisure wisdom of his Queen,  
Before he go, that since these statutes past,  
Gardiner out-Gardiners Gardiner in his  
heat,

Bonner cannot out-Bonner his own self—  
Beast!—but they play with fire as chil-  
dren do,

And burn the house. I know that these are  
breeding

A fierce resolve and fixt heart-hate in men  
Against the King, the Queen, the Holy  
Father,

The faith itself. Can I not see him?

*Renard.* Not now.  
And in all this, my Lord, her Majesty

Is flint of flint, you may strike fire from  
her,

Not hope to melt her. I will give your  
message.

*[Exeunt PETRE and HOWARD.]*

*Enter PHILIP (musing)*

*Philip.* She will not have Prince Philibert  
of Savoy,

I talk'd with her in vain—says she will live  
And die true maid—a goodly creature too.  
Would *she* had been the Queen! yet she  
must have him;

She troubles England: that she breathes  
in England

Is life and lungs to every rebel birth

That passes out of embryo.

Simon Renard!—  
This Howard, whom they fear, what was  
he saying?

*Renard.* What your imperial father said,  
my liege,

To deal with heresy gentlier. Gardiner  
burns,

And Bonner burns; and it would seem  
this people

Care more for our brief life in their wet  
land,

Than yours in happier Spain. I told my  
Lord

He should not vex her Highness; she  
would say

These are the means God works with, that  
His church

May flourish.

*Philip.* Ay, sir, but in statesmanship  
To strike too soon is oft to miss the blow.  
Thou knowest I bad my chaplain, Castro,  
preach

Against these burnings.

*Renard.* And the Emperor  
Approved you, and when last he wrote,  
declared

His comfort in your Grace that you were  
bland

And affable to men of all estates,  
In hope to charm them from their hate of  
Spain.

*Philip.* In hope to crush all heresy under  
Spain.

But, Renard, I am sicker staying here  
Than any sea could make me passing  
hence,

Tho' I be ever deadly sick at sea.

So sick am I with biding for this child.

Is it the fashion in this clime for women  
To go twelve months in bearing of a  
child?

The nurses yawn'd, the cradle gaped, they  
led

Processions, chanted litanies, clash'd their  
bells,

Shot off their lying cannon, and her priests  
Have preach'd, the fools, of this fair prince  
to come;

Till, by St. James, I find myself the fool.  
Why do you lift your eyebrow at me thus?

*Renard.* I never saw your Highness  
moved till now.

*Philip.* So weary am I of this wet land of  
theirs,

And every soul of man that breathes  
therein.

*Renard.* My liege, we must not drop the  
mask before

The masquerade is over—

*Philip.* —Have I dropt it?

I have but shown a loathing face to you,  
Who knew it from the first.

*Enter MARY*

*Mary (aside).* With Renard. Still  
Parleying with Renard, all the day with  
Renard,

And scarce a greeting all the day for me—  
And goes to-morrow. [*Exit MARY.*

*Philip (to RENARD, who advances to him).*

Well, sir, is there more?

*Renard (who has perceived the QUEEN).*

May Simon Renard speak a single  
word?

*Philip.* Ay.

*Renard.* And be forgiven for it?

*Philip.* Simon Renard

Knows me too well to speak a single word  
That could not be forgiven.

*Renard.* Well, my liege,

Your Grace hath a most chaste and loving  
wife.

*Philip.* Why not? The Queen of Philip  
should be chaste.

*Renard.* Ay, but, my Lord, you know  
what Virgil sings,

Woman is various and most mutable.

*Philip.* She play the harlot! never.

*Renard.* No, sire, no,

Not dream'd of by the rabidest gossipier.  
There was a paper thrown into the palace,

'The King hath wearied of his barren  
bride.'

She came upon it, read it, and then rent it,  
With all the rage of one who hates a truth  
He cannot but allow. Sire, I would have  
you—

What should I say, I cannot pick my  
words—

Be somewhat less—majestic to your Queen.

*Philip.* Am I to change my manners,  
Simon Renard,

Because these islanders are brutal beasts?  
Or would you have me turn a sonneteer,

And warble those brief-sighted eyes of  
hers?

*Renard.* Brief-sighted tho' they be, I  
have seen them, sire,

When you perchance were trifling royally  
With some fair dame of court, suddenly fill

With such fierce fire—had it been fire  
indeed

It would have burnt both speakers.

*Philp.* Ay, and then?  
*Renard.* Sire, might it not be policy in some matter  
 Of small importance now and then to cede  
 A point to her demand?  
*Philp.* Well, I am going.  
*Renard.* For should her love when you are gone, my liege,  
 Witness these papers, there will not be wanting  
 Those that will urge her injury—should her love—  
 And I have known such women more than one—  
 Veer to the counterpoint, and jealousy  
 Hath in it an alchemic force to fuse  
 Almost into one metal love and hate,—  
 And she impress her wrongs upon her Council,  
 And these again upon her Parliament—  
 We are not loved here, and would be then perhaps  
 Not so well holpen in our wars with France,  
 As else we might be—here she comes.

Enter MARY

*Mary.* O Philip!  
 Nay, must you go indeed?  
*Philp.* Madam, I must.  
*Mary.* The parting of a husband and a wife  
 Is like the cleaving of a heart; one half  
 Will flutter here, one there.  
*Philp.* You say true, Madam.  
*Mary.* The Holy Virgin will not have me yet  
 Lose the sweet hope that I may bear a prince.  
 If such a prince were born and you not here!  
*Philp.* I should be here if such a prince were born.  
*Mary.* But must you go?  
*Philp.* Madam, you know my father,  
 Retiring into cloistral solitude  
 To yield the remnant of his years to heaven,  
 Will shift the yoke and weight of all the world  
 From off his neck to mine. We meet at Brussels.

But since mine absence will not be for long,  
 Your Majesty shall go to Dover with me,  
 And wait my coming back.  
*Mary.* To Dover? no  
 I am too feeble. I will go to Greenwich,  
 So you will have me with you; and there watch  
 All that is gracious in the breath of heaven  
 Draw with your sails from our poor land,  
 and pass  
 And leave me, Philip, with my prayers  
 for you.  
*Philp.* And doubtless I shall profit by  
 your prayers.  
*Mary.* Methinks that would you tarry  
 one day more  
 (The news was sudden) I could mould  
 myself  
 To bear your going better; will you do it?  
*Philp.* Madam, a day may sink or save  
 a realm.  
*Mary.* A day may save a heart from  
 breaking too.  
*Philp.* Well, Simon Renard, shall we  
 stop a day?  
*Renard.* Your Grace's business will not  
 suffer, sire,  
 For one day more, so far as I can tell.  
*Philp.* Then one day more to please her  
 Majesty.  
*Mary.* The sunshine sweeps across my  
 life again.  
 O if I knew you felt this parting, Philip,  
 As I do!  
*Philp.* By St. James I do protest,  
 Upon the faith and honour of a Spaniard,  
 I am vastly grieved to leave your Majesty.  
 Simon, is supper ready?  
*Renard.* Ay, my liege,  
 I saw the covers laying.  
*Philp.* Let us have it. [Exeunt.

ACT IV

SCENE I

A Room in the Palace

MARY, CARDINAL POLE

*Mary.* What have you there?  
*Pole.* So please your Majesty,  
 A long petition from the foreign exiles

To spare the life of Cranmer. Bishop  
Thirlby,  
And my Lord Paget and Lord William  
Howard,  
Crave, in the same cause, hearing of your  
Grace.  
Hath he not written himself—infatuated—  
To sue you for his life?

*Mary.* His life? Oh, no;  
Not sued for that—he knows it were in  
vain.

But so much of the anti-papal leaven  
Works in him yet, he hath pray'd me not  
to sully  
Mine own prerogative, and degrade the  
realm

By seeking justice at a stranger's hand  
Against my natural subject. King and  
Queen,

To whom he owes his loyalty after God,  
Shall these accuse him to a foreign prince?  
Death would not grieve him more. I can-  
not be

True to this realm of England and the  
Pope

Together, says the heretic.

*Pole.* And there errs;  
As he hath ever err'd thro' vanity.  
A secular kingdom is but as the body  
Lacking a soul; and in itself a beast.  
The Holy Father in a secular kingdom  
Is as the soul descending out of heaven  
Into a body generate.

*Mary.* Write to him, then.

*Pole.* I will.

*Mary.* And sharply, Pole.

*Pole.* Here come the Cranmerites!

*Enter* THIRLBY, LORD PAGET, LORD  
WILLIAM HOWARD

*Howard.* Health to your Grace! Good  
morrow, my Lord Cardinal;  
We make our humble prayer unto your  
Grace  
That Cranmer may withdraw to foreign  
parts,  
Or into private life within the realm.  
In several bills and declarations, Madam,  
He hath recanted all his heresies.

*Paget.* Ay, ay; if Bonner have not forged  
the bills.

[*Aside.*

*Mary.* Did not More die, and Fisher?  
he must burn.

*Howard.* He hath recanted, Madam.

*Mary.* The better for him.  
He burns in Purgatory, not in Hell.

*Howard.* Ay, ay, your Grace; but it was  
never seen

That any one recanting thus at full,  
As Cranmer hath, came to the fire on  
earth.

*Mary.* It will be seen now, then.

*Thirlby.* O Madam, Madam!  
I thus implore you, low upon my knees,  
To reach the hand of mercy to my friend.  
I have err'd with him; with him I have  
recanted.

What human reason is there why my friend  
Should meet with lesser mercy than  
myself?

*Mary.* My Lord of Ely, this. After a riot  
We hang the leaders, let their following go.  
Cranmer is head and father of these  
heresies,

New learning as they call it; yea, may God  
Forget me at most need when I forget  
Her foul divorce—my sainted mother—  
No!—

*Howard.* Ay, ay, but mighty doctors  
doubted there.

The Pope himself waver'd; and more than  
one

Row'd in that galley—Gardiner to wit,  
Whom truly I deny not to have been  
Your faithful friend and trusty councillor.  
Hath not you Highness ever read his book,  
His tractate upon True Obedience,  
Writ by himself and Bonner?

*Mary.* I will take  
Such order with all bad, heretical books  
That none shall hold them in his house  
and live,

Henceforward. No, my Lord.

*Howard.* Then never read it.  
The truth is here. Your father was a man  
Of such colossal kinghood, yet so cour-  
teous,

Except when wroth, you scarce could meet  
his eye

And hold your own; and were he wroth  
indeed,

You held it less, or not at all. I say,

Your father had a will that beat men  
down;  
Your father had a brain that beat men  
down—

*Pole.* Not me, my Lord.

*Howard.* No, for you were not here;  
You sit upon this fallen Cranmer's throne;  
And it would more become you, my Lord

Legate,  
To join a voice, so potent with her High-  
ness,

To ours in plea for Cranmer than to stand  
On naked self-assertion.

*Mary.* All your voices  
Are waves on flint. The heretic must burn.

*Howard.* Yet once he saved your  
Majesty's own life;  
Stood out against the King in your behalf,  
At his own peril.

*Mary.* I know not if he did;  
And if he did I care not, my Lord Howard.  
My life is not so happy, no such boon,  
That I should spare to take a heretic  
priest's,

Who saved it or not saved. Why do you  
vex me?

*Paget.* Yet to save Cranmer were to serve  
the Church,

Your Majesty's I mean; he is effaced,  
Self-blotted out; so wounded in his  
honour,

He can but creep down into some dark  
hole

Like a hurt beast, and hide himself and  
die;

But if you burn him,—well, your Highness  
knows

The saying, 'Martyr's blood—seed of the  
Church.'

*Mary.* Of the true Church; but his is  
none, nor will be.

You are too politic for me, my Lord Paget.  
And if he have to live so loath'd a life,  
It were more merciful to burn him now.

*Thirlby.* O yet relent. O, Madam, if you  
knew him

As I do, ever gentle, and so gracious,  
With all his learning—

*Mary.* Yet a heretic still.  
His learning makes his burning the more  
just.

*Thirlby.* So worship't of all those that  
came across him;

The stranger at his hearth, and all his  
house—

*Mary.* His children and his concubine,  
belike.

*Thirlby.* To do him any wrong was to  
beget

A kindness from him, for his heart was  
rich,

Of such fine mould, that if you sow'd  
therein

The seed of Hate, it blossom'd Charity.

*Pole.* 'After his kind it costs him  
nothing,' there's

An old world English adage to the point.  
These are but natural graces, my good

Bishop,  
Which in the Catholic garden are as  
flowers,

But on the heretic dunghill only weeds.

*Howard.* Such weeds make dunghills  
gracious.

*Mary.* Enough, my Lords.  
It is God's will, the Holy Father's will,

And Philip's will, and mine, that he should  
burn.

He is pronounced anathema.

*Howard.* Farewell, Madam,  
God grant you ampler mercy at your call  
Than you have shown to Cranmer.

[*Exeunt* LORDS.]

*Pole.* After this,  
Your Grace will hardly care to overlook

This same petition of the foreign exiles  
For Cranmer's life.

*Mary.* Make out the writ to-night.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II

*Oxford. Cranmer in Prison*

*Cranmer.* Last night, I dream'd the  
faggots were alight,

And that myself was fasten'd to the stake,  
And found it all a visionary flame,

Cool as the light in old decaying wood;  
And then King Harry look'd from out a  
cloud,

And bad me have good courage; and I  
heard

An angel cry 'There is more joy in Heaven,'—

And after that, the trumpet of the dead.

[*Trumpets without.*]

Why, there are trumpets blowing now: what is it?

*Enter FATHER COLE*

*Cole.* Cranmer, I come to question you again;

Have you remain'd in the true Catholic faith

I left you in?

*Cranmer.* In the true Catholic faith, By Heaven's grace, I am more and more confirm'd.

Why are the trumpets blowing, Father Cole?

*Cole.* Cranmer, it is decided by the Council

That you to-day should read your recantation

Before the people in St. Mary's Church.

And there be many heretics in the town, Who loathe you for your late return to Rome,

And might assail you passing through the street,

And tear you piecemeal: so you have a guard.

*Cranmer.* Or seek to rescue me. I thank the Council.

*Cole.* Do you lack any money?

*Cranmer.* Nay, why should I? The prison fare is good enough for me.

*Cole.* Ay, but to give the poor.

*Cranmer.* Hand it me, then! I thank you.

*Cole.* For a little space, farewell; Until I see you in St. Mary's Church.

[*Exit COLE.*]

*Cranmer.* It is against all precedent to burn

One who recants; they mean to pardon me. To give the poor—they give the poor who die.

Well, burn me or not burn me I am fixt; It is but a communion, not a mass:

A holy supper, not a sacrifice; No man can make his Maker—Villa

Garcia.

*Enter VILLA GARCIA*

*Villa Garcia.* Pray you write out this paper for me. Cranmer.

*Cranmer.* Have I not writ enough to satisfy you?

*Villa Garcia.* It is the last.

*Cranmer.* Give it me, then.

[*He writes.*]

*Villa Garcia.* Now sign.

*Cranmer.* I have sign'd enough, and I will sign no more.

*Villa Garcia.* It is no more than what you have sign'd already,

The public form thereof.

*Cranmer.* It may be so;

I sign it with my presence, if I read it.

*Villa Garcia.* But this is idle of you.

Well, sir, well,

You are to beg the people to pray for you; Exhort them to a pure and virtuous life;

Declare the Queen's right to the throne; confess

Your faith before all hearers; and retract That Eucharistic doctrine in your book.

Will you not sign it now?

*Cranmer.* No, Villa Garcia, I sign no more. Will they have mercy on me?

*Villa Garcia.* Have you good hopes of mercy! So, farewell. [*Exit.*]

*Cranmer.* Good hopes, not theirs, have I that I am fixt,

Fixt beyond fall; however, in strange hours,

After the long brain-dazing colloquies, And thousand-times recurring argument

Of those two friars ever in my prison,

When left alone in my despondency, Without a friend, a book, my faith would seem

Dead or half-drown'd, or else swam heavily Against the huge corruptions of the

Church,

Monsters of mistradition, old enough

To scare me into dreaming, 'what am I,

Cranmer, against whole ages?' was it so,

Or am I slandering my most inward friend,

To veil the fault of my most outward foe—

The soft and tremulous coward in the flesh?

O higher, holier, earlier, purer church,  
I have found thee and not leave thee any  
more.

It is but a communion, not a mass—  
No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast!  
(Writes.) So, so; this will I say—thus will  
I pray. [Puts up the paper.]

Enter BONNER

Bonner. Good day, old friend; what, you  
look somewhat worn;

And yet it is a day to test your health  
Ev'n at the best: I scarce have spoken  
with you  
Since when?—your degradation. At your  
trial

Never stood up a bolder man than you;  
You would not cap the pope's commis-  
sioner—

Your learning, and your stoutness, and  
your heresy,

Dumbfounded half of us. So, after that,  
We had to dis-archbishop and unlord,  
And make you simple Cranmer once again.  
The common barber clipt your hair, and I  
Scraped from your finger-points the holy  
oil;

And worse than all, you had to kneel to  
me;

Which was not pleasant for you, Master  
Cranmer.

Now you, that would not recognise the  
Pope,

And you, that would not own the Real  
Presence,

Have found a real presence in the stake,  
Which frights you back into the ancient  
faith;

And so you have recanted to the Pope.  
How are the mighty fallen, Master Cran-  
mer!

Cranmer. You have been more fierce  
against the Pope than I;  
But why fling back the stone he strikes me  
with? [Aside.]

O Bonner, if I ever did you kindness—  
Power hath been given you to try faith by  
fire—

Pray you, remembering how yourself have  
changed,

Be somewhat pitiful, after I have gone,

To the poor flock—to women and to  
children—

That when I was archbishop held with me.  
Bonner. Ay—gentle as they call you—  
live or die!

Pitiful to this pitiful heresy?

I must obey the Queen and Council, man.  
Win thro' this day with honour to your-  
self,

And I'll say something for you—so—  
good-bye. [Exit.]

Cranmer. This hard coarse man of old  
hath crouch'd to me

Till I myself was half ashamed for him.

Enter THIRLBY

Weep not, good Thirlby.

Thirlby. Oh, my Lord, my Lord!  
My heart is no such block as Bonner's is:  
Who would not weep?

Cranmer. Why do you so my-lord me,  
Who am disgraced?

Thirlby. On earth; but saved in heaven  
By your recanting.

Cranmer. Will they burn me,  
Thirlby?

Thirlby. Alas, they will; these burnings  
will not help

The purpose of the faith; but my poor  
voice

Against them is a whisper to the roar  
Of a spring-tide.

Cranmer. And they will surely  
burn me?

Thirlby. Ay; and besides, will have you  
in the church

Repeat your recantation in the ears  
Of all men, to the saving of their souls,  
Before your execution. May God help you  
Thro' that hard hour!

Cranmer. And may God bless you,  
Thirlby!

Well, they shall hear my recantation there.  
[Exit Thirlby.]

Disgraced, dishonour'd!—not by them,  
indeed,

By mine own self—by mine own hand!  
O thin-skin'd hand and jutting veins,  
'twas you

That sign'd the burning of poor Joan of  
Kent;



But then she was a witch. You have written much,  
But you were never raised to plead for Frith,  
Whose dogmas I have reach'd: he was deliver'd  
To the secular arm to burn; and there was Lambert;  
Who can foresee himself? truly these burnings,  
As Thirlby says, are profitless to the burners,  
And help the other side. You shall burn too,  
Burn first when I am burnt.  
Fire—inch by inch to die in agony!  
Latimer  
Had a brief end—not Ridley. Hooper burn'd  
Three-quarters of an hour. Will my faggots  
Be wet as his were? It is a day of rain.  
I will not muse upon it.  
My fancy takes the burner's part, and makes  
The fire seem even crueller than it is.  
No, I not doubt that God will give me strength,  
Albeit I have denied him.

*Enter SOTO and VILLA GARCIA*

*Villa Garcia.* We are ready  
To take you to St. Mary's, Master Cranmer.  
*Cranmer.* And I: lead on; ye loose me  
from my bonds. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III

*St. Mary's Church*

COLE in the Pulpit, LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME presiding. LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, LORD PAGET, and others. CRANMER enters between SOTO and VILLA GARCIA, and the whole Choir strike up 'Nunc Dimittis.' CRANMER is set upon a Scaffold before the people.

*Cole.* Behold him—

[*A pause: people in the foreground.*  
*People.* Oh, unhappy sight!

*First Protestant.* See how the tears run down his fatherly face.

*Second Protestant.* James, didst thou ever see a carrion crow

Stand watching a sick beast before he dies?

*First Protestant.* Him perch'd up there?

I wish some thunderbolt

Would make this Cole a cinder, pulpit and all.

*Cole.* Behold him, brethren: he hath cause to weep!—

So have we all: weep with him if ye will,  
Yet—

It is expedient for one to die,

Yea, for the people, lest the people die.

Yet wherefore should he die that hath return'd

To the one Catholic Universal Church,

Repentant of his errors?

*Protestant murmurs.* Ay, tell us that.

*Cole.* Those of the wrong side will despise the man,

Deeming him one that thro' the fear of death

Gave up his cause, except he seal his faith

In sight of all with flaming martyrdom.

*Cranmer.* Ay.

*Cole.* Ye hear him, and albeit there may seem

According to the canons pardon due

To him that so repents, yet are there causes

Wherefore our Queen and Council at this time

Adjudge him to the death. He hath been a traitor,

A shaker and confounder of the realm;

And when the King's divorce was sued at Rome,

He here, this heretic metropolitan,

As if he had been the Holy Father, sat

And judg'd it. Did I call him heretic?

A huge heresiarch! never was it known

That any man so writing, preaching so,

So poisoning the Church, so long continuing,

Hath found his pardon; therefore he must die,

For warning and example.

Other reasons

There be for this man's ending, which our Queen

And Council at this present deem it not expedient to be known.

*Protestant murmurs.* I warrant you.

*Cole.* Take therefore, all, example by this man,

For if our Holy Queen not pardon him,  
Much less shall others in like cause escape,  
That all of you, the highest as the lowest,  
May learn there is no power against the Lord.

There stands a man, once of so high degree,  
Chief prelate of our Church, archbishop,  
first

In Council, second person in the realm,  
Friend for so long time of a mighty King;  
And now ye see downfallen and debased  
From councillor to caitiff—fallen so low,  
The leprous flutterings of the byway, scum  
And offal of the city would not change  
Estates with him; in brief, so miserable.  
There is no hope of better left for him,  
No place for worse.

Yet, Cranmer, be thou glad.

This is the work of God. He is glorified  
In thy conversion: lo! thou art reclaim'd;  
He brings thee home: nor fear but that  
to-day

Thou shalt receive the penitent thief's  
award,

And be with Christ the Lord in Paradise.  
Remember how God made the fierce fire  
seem

To those three children like a pleasant dew.  
Remember, too,  
The triumph of St. Andrew on his cross,  
The patience of St. Lawrence in the fire.  
Thus, if thou call on God and all the saints,  
God will beat down the fury of the flame,  
Or give thee saintly strength to undergo.  
And for thy soul shall masses here be sung  
By every priest in Oxford. Pray for him.

*Cranmer.* Ay, one and all, dear brothers,  
pray for me;

Pray with one breath, one heart, one soul  
for me.

*Cole.* And now, lest anyone among you  
doubt

The man's conversion and remorse of  
heart,

Yourselves shall hear him speak. Speak,  
Master Cranmer,

Fulfil your promise made me, and pro-  
claim

Your true undoubted faith, that all may  
hear.

*Cranmer.* And that I will. O God, Father  
of Heaven!

O Son of God, Redeemer of the world!  
O Holy Ghost! proceeding from them  
both,

Three persons and one God, have mercy  
on me,

Most miserable sinner, wretched man.

I have offended against heaven and earth  
More grievously than any tongue can tell.  
Then whither should I flee for any help?  
I am ashamed to lift my eyes to heaven,  
And I can find no refuge upon earth.

Shall I despair then?—God forbid! O God,  
For thou art merciful, refusing none  
That come to Thee for succour, unto Thee,  
Therefore, I come; humble myself to Thee;  
Saying, O Lord God, although my sins be  
great,

For thy great mercy have mercy! O God  
the Son,

Not for slight faults alone, when thou  
becamest

Man in the Flesh, was the great mystery  
wrought;

O God the Father, not for little sins  
Didst thou yield up thy Son to human  
death;

But for the greatest sin that can be sinn'd,  
Yea, even such as mine, incalculable,  
Unpardonable,—sin against the light,  
The truth of God, which I had proven and  
known.

Thy mercy must be greater than all sin.  
Forgive me, Father, for no merit of mine,  
But that Thy name by man be glorified,  
And Thy most blessed Son's, who died  
for man.

Good people, every man at time of death  
Would fain set forth some saying that may  
live

After his death and better humankind;  
For death gives life's last word a power to  
live,

And, like the stone-cut epitaph, remain  
After the vanish'd voice, and speak to men.  
God grant me grace to glorify my God!  
And first I say it is a grievous case,  
Many so dote upon this bubble world,

Whose colours in a moment break and fly,  
They care for nothing else. What saith

St. John:—

'Love of this world is hatred against God.'  
Again, I pray you all that, next to God,  
You do un murmuringly and willingly  
Obey your King and Queen, and not for  
dread

Of these alone, but from the fear of Him  
Whose ministers they be to govern you.  
Thirdly, I pray you all to live together  
Like brethren; yet what hatred Christian  
men

Bear to each other, seeming not as brethren,  
But mortal foes! But do you good to all  
As much as in you lieth. Hurt no man more  
Than you would harm your loving natural  
brother

Of the same roof, same breast. If any do,  
Albeit he think himself at home with God,  
Of this be sure, he is whole worlds away.

*Protestant murmurs.* What sort of  
brothers then be those that lust  
To burn each other?

*Williams.* Peace among you, there!

*Cranmer.* Fourthly, to those that own  
exceeding wealth,

Remember that sore saying spoken once  
By Him that was the truth, 'How hard  
it is

For the rich man to enter into Heaven;  
Let all rich men remember that hard word.  
I have not time for more: if ever, now  
Let them flow forth in charity, seeing now  
The poor so many, and all food so dear.  
Long have I lain in prison, yet have heard  
Of all their wretchedness. Give to the poor,  
Ye give to God. He is with us in the poor.

And now, and forasmuch as I have come  
To the last end of life, and thereupon  
Hangs all my past, and all my life to be,  
Either to live with Christ in Heaven with  
joy,

Or to be still in pain with devils in hell;  
And, seeing in a moment, I shall find

[*Pointing upwards.*

Heaven or else hell ready to swallow me,

[*Pointing downwards.*

I shall declare to you my very faith  
Without all colour.

*Cole.* Hear him, my good brethren.

*Cranmer.* I do believe in God, Father  
of all;

In every article of the Catholic faith,  
And every syllable taught us by our Lord,  
His prophets, and apostles, in the Testa-  
ments,

Both Old and New.

*Cole.* Be plainer, Master Cranmer.

*Cranmer.* And now I come to the great  
cause that weighs

Upon my conscience more than anything  
Or said or done in all my life by me;  
For there be writings I have set abroad  
Against the truth I knew within my heart,  
Written for fear of death, to save my life,  
If that might be; the papers by my hand  
Sign'd since my degradation—by this hand

[*Holding out his right hand.*

Written and sign'd—I here renounce them  
all;

And, since my hand offended, having  
written

Against my heart, my hand shall first be  
burnt,

So I may come to the fire.

[*Dead silence.*

*Protestant murmurs.*

*First Protestant.* I knew it would be so.

*Second Protestant.* Our prayers are  
heard!

*Third Protestant.* God bless him!

*Catholic murmurs.* Out upon him! out  
upon him!

Liar! dissembler! traitor! to the fire!

*Williams (raising his voice).* You know  
that you recanted all you said

Touching the sacrament in that same book  
You wrote against my Lord of Winchester;  
Dissemble not; play the plain Christian  
man.

*Cranmer.* Alas, my Lord,

I have been a man loved plainness all my  
life;

I *did* dissemble, but the hour has come  
For utter truth and plainness; wherefore,

I say,

I hold by all I wrote within that book.

Moreover,

As for the Pope I count him Antichrist,  
With all his devil's doctrines; and refuse,  
Reject him, and abhor him. I have said.

[*Cries on all sides, 'Pull him down!  
Away with him!*

**Cole.** Ay, stop the heretic's mouth! Hale him away!

**Wilhams.** Harm him not, harm him not! have him to the fire!

[*CRANMER goes out between Two Friars, smiling; hands are reached to him from the crowd. LORD WILLIAM HOWARD and LORD PAGET are left alone in the church.*

**Paget.** The nave and aisles all empty as a fool's jest!

No, here's Lord William Howard. What, my Lord,

You have not gone to see the burning?

**Howard.** Fie!

To stand at ease, and stare as at a show,  
And watch a good man burn. Never again.  
I saw the deaths of Latimer and Ridley.  
Moreover, tho' a Catholic, I would not,  
For the pure honour of our common nature,  
Hear what I might—another recantation  
Of Cranmer at the stake.

**Paget.** You'd not hear that.

He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd upright;

His eye was like a soldier's, whom the general

He looks to and he leans on as his God,  
Hath rated for some backwardness and bidd'n him

Charge one against a thousand, and the man

Hurls his soil'd life against the pikes and dies.

**Howard.** Yet that he might not after all those papers

Of recantation yield again, who knows?

**Paget.** Papers of recantation! Think you then

That Cranmer read all papers that he sign'd?

Or sign'd all those they tell us that he sign'd?

Nay, I trow not: and you shall see, my Lord,

That howsoever hero-like the man  
Dies in the fire, this Bonner or another  
Will in some lying fashion misreport  
His ending to the glory of their church.

And you saw Latimer and Ridley die?  
Latimer was eighty, was he not? his best  
Of life was over then.

**Howard.** His eighty years  
Look'd somewhat crooked on him in his  
frieze;

But after they had stript him to his shroud,  
He stood upright, a lad of twenty-one,  
And gather'd with his hands the starting  
flame,

And wash'd his hands and all his face  
therein,

Until the powder suddenly blew him dead.  
Ridley was longer burning; but he died  
As manfully and boldly, and, 'fore God,  
I know them heretics, but right English  
ones.

If ever, as heaven grant, we clash with  
Spain,

Our Ridley-soldiers and our Latimer-  
sailors

Will teach her something.

**Paget.** Your mild Legate Pole

Will tell you that the devil helpt them  
thro' it.

[*A murmur of the Crowd in the distance.*

Hark, how those Roman wolfdogs howl  
and bay him!

**Howard.** Might it not be the other side  
rejoicing

In his brave end?

**Paget.** They are too crush'd, too  
broken,

They can but weep in silence.

**Howard.** Ay, ay, Paget,

They have brought it in large measure on  
themselves.

Have I not heard them mock the blessed  
Host

In songs so lewd, the beast might roar his  
claim

To being in God's image, more than they?  
Have I not seen the gamekeeper, the

groom,  
Gardener, and huntsman, in the parson's  
place,

The parson from his own spire swung out  
dead,

And Ignorance crying in the streets, and  
all men

Regarding her? I say they have drawn the fire

On their own heads: yet, Paget, I do hold  
The Catholic, if he have the greater right,  
Hath been the cruelier.

*Paget.* Action and re-action,  
The miserable see-saw of our child-world,  
Make us despise it at odd hours, my Lord.  
Heaven help that this re-action not re-act  
Yet fiercelier under Queen Elizabeth,  
So that she come to rule us.

*Howard.* The world's mad.

*Paget.* My Lord, the world is like a  
drunken man,

Who cannot move straight to his end—but  
reels

Now to the right, then as far to the left,  
Push'd by the crowd beside—and under-  
foot

An earthquake; for since Henry for a  
doubt—

Which a young lust had clapt upon the  
back,

Crying, 'Forward!'—set our old church  
rocking, men

Have hardly known what to believe, or  
whether

They should believe in anything; the  
currents

So shift and change, they see not how they  
are borne,

Nor whither. I conclude the King a beast;  
Verily a lion if you will—the world

A most obedient beast and fool—myself  
Half beast and fool as appertaining to it;

Altho' your Lordship hath as little of each  
Cleaving to your original Adam-clay,

As may be consonant with mortality.

*Howard.* We talk and Cranmer suffers.

The kindest man I ever knew; see, see,  
I speak of him in the past. Unhappy land!  
Hard-natured Queen, half-Spanish in her-  
self,

And grafted on the hard-grain'd stock of  
Spain—

Her life, since Philip left her, and she lost  
Her fierce desire of bearing him a child,

Hath, like a brief and bitter winter's day,  
Gone narrowing down and darkening to a  
close.

There will be more conspiracies, I fear.

*Paget.* Ay, ay, beware of France.

*Howard.* O Paget, Paget!

I have seen heretics of the poorer sort,  
Expectant of the rack from day to day,

To whom the fire were welcome, lying  
chain'd

In breathless dungeons over steaming  
sewers,

Fed with rank bread that crawl'd upon the  
tongue,

And putrid water, every drop a worm,  
Until they died of rotted limbs; and then

Cast on the dunhill naked, and become  
Hideously alive again from head to heel,

Made even the carrion-nosing mongrel  
vomit

With hate and horror.

*Paget.* Nay, you sicken *me*  
To hear you.

*Howard.* Fancy-sick; these things are  
done,

Done right against the promise of this  
Queen

Twice given.

*Paget.* No faith with heretics, my  
Lord!

Hist! there be two old gossips—gospellers,  
I take it; stand behind the pillar here;

I warrant you they talk about the burning.

*Enter TWO OLD WOMEN. JOAN, and after  
her TIB*

*Joan.* Why, it be Tib!

*Tib.* I cum behind tha, gall, and couldn't  
make tha hear. Eh, the wind and the wet!

What a day, what a day! nigh upo' judge-  
ment daay loike. Pwoaps be pretty things,

Joan, but they wunt set i' the Lord's cheer  
o' that daay.

*Joan.* I must set down myself, Tib; it be  
a var waay vor my owld legs up vro' Islip.  
Eh, my rheumatizy be that bad howiver be  
I to win to the burnin'.

*Tib.* I should saay 'twur ower by now.  
I'd ha' been here avore, but Dumble wur  
blow'd wi' the wind, and Dumble's the  
best milcher in Islip.

*Joan.* Our Daisy's as good 'z her.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Our Daisy's butter's as good 'z  
hern.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Our Daisy's cheeses be better.

*Tib.* Noa, Joan.

*Joan.* Eh, then ha' thy waay wi' me, Tib; ez thou hast wi' thy owld man.

*Tib.* Ay, Joan, and my owld man wur up and awaay betimes wi' dree hard eggs for a good plecte at the burnin'; and barrin' the wet, Hodge 'ud ha' been a-harrowin' o' white peasen i' the outfield—and barrin' the wind, Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, so 'z we were forced to stick her, but we fetched her round at last. Thank the Lord therefore. Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

*Joan.* Thou's thy way wi' man and beast, Tib. I wonder at tha', it beats me! Eh, but I do know ez Pwoaps and vires be bad things; tell 'ee now, I heerd summat as summun towld summun o' owld Bishop Gardiner's end; there wur an owld lord a-cum to dine wi' un, and a wur so owld a couldn't bide vor his dinner, but a had to bide howsomiver, vor 'I want dine,' says my Lord Bishop, says he, 'not till I hears ez Latimer and Ridley be a-vire;' and so they bided on and on till vour o' the clock, till his man cum in post vro' here, and tells un ez the vire has tuk holt. 'Now,' says the Bishop, says he, 'we'll gwo to dinner;' and the owld lord fell to 's meat wi' a will, God bless un! but Gardiner wur ströck down like by the hand o' God avore a could taste a mossel, and a set un all a-vire, so 'z the tongue on un cum a-lolluping out 'o 'is mouth as black as a rat. Thank the Lord, therefore.

*Paget.* The fools!

*Tib.* Ay, Joan; and Queen Mary gwocs on a-burnin' and a-burnin', to get her baaby born; but all her burnins' 'ill never burn out the hypocrisy that makes the water in her. There's nought but the vire of God's hell ez can burn out that.

*Joan.* Thank the Lord, therefore.

*Paget.* The fools!

*Tib.* A-burnin', and a-burnin', and a-makin' o' volk madder and madder; but tek thou my word vor't, Joan,—and I bean't wrong not twice i' ten year—the burnin' o' the owld archbishop 'll burn the

Pwoap out o' this 'ere land vor iver and iver.

*Howard.* Out of the church, you brace of cursed crones,

Or I will have you duck'd! (*Women hurry out.*) Said I not right?

For how should reverend prelate or throned prince

Brook for an hour such brute malignity?

Ah, what an acrid wine has Luther brew'd,

*Paget.* Pooh, pooh, my Lord! poor garrulous country-wives.

Buy you their cheeses, and they'll side with you;

You cannot judge the liquor from the lees.

*Howard.* I think that in some sort we may. But see,

#### Enter PETERS

Peters, my gentleman, an honest Catholic, Who follow'd with the crowd to Cranmer's fire.

One that would neither misreport nor lie, Not to gain paradise: no, nor if the Pope, Charged him to do it—he is white as death. Peters, how pale you look! you bring the smoke

Of Cranmer's burning with you.

*Peters.* Twice or thrice

The smoke of Cranmer's burning wrapt me round.

*Howard.* Peters, you know me Catholic, but English.

Did he die bravely? Tell me that, or leave All else untold.

*Peters.* My Lord, he died most bravely.

*Howard.* Then tell me all.

*Paget.* Ay, Master Peters, tell us.

*Peters.* You saw him how he past among the crowd;

And ever as he walk'd the Spanish friars Still plied him with entreaty and reproach: But Cranmer, as the helmsman at the helm Steers, ever looking to the happy haven Where he shall rest at night, moved to his death;

And I could see that many silent hands Came from the crowd and met his own; and thus,

# QUEEN MARY

ACT V

When we had come where Ridley burnt  
with Latimer,  
He, with a cheerful smile, as one whose  
mind

Is all made up, in haste put off the rags  
They had mock'd his misery with, and all  
in white,

His long white beard, which he had never  
shaven

Since Henry's death, down-sweeping to  
the chain,

Wherewith they bound him to the stake,  
he stood

More like an ancient father of the Church,  
Than heretic of these times; and still the  
friars

Plied him, but Cranmer only shook his  
head,

Or answer'd them in smiling negatives;  
Whereat Lord Williams gave a sudden  
cry:—

'Make short! make short!' and so they lit  
the wood.

Then Cranmer lifted his left hand to  
heaven,

And thrust his right into the bitter flame;  
And crying, in his deep voice, more than  
once,

'This hath offended—this unworthy hand!'  
So held it till it all was burn'd, before

The flame had reach'd his body; I stood  
near—

Mark'd him—he never uttered moan of  
pain:

He never stirr'd or writhed, but, like a  
statue,

Unmoving in the greatness of the flame,  
Gave up the ghost; and so past martyr-  
like—

Martyr I may not call him—past—but  
whither?

*Paget.* To purgatory, man, to purgatory.

*Peters.* Nay, but, my Lord, he denied  
purgatory.

*Paget.* Why then to heaven, and God ha'  
mercy on him.

*Howard.* Paget, despite his fearful  
heresies,

I loved the man, and needs must moan  
for him;

O Cranmer!

*Paget.* But your moan is useless now:  
Come out, my Lord, it is a world of fools.  
[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT V

### SCENE I

*London. Hall in the Palace*

QUEEN, SIR NICHOLAS HEATH

*Heath.* Madam,

I do assure you, that it must be look'd to:  
Calais is but ill-garrison'd, in Guisnes  
Are scarce two hundred men, and the  
French fleet

Rule in the narrow seas. It must be  
look'd to,

If war should fall between yourself and  
France;

Or you will lose your Calais.

*Mary.* It shall be look'd to;

I wish you a good morning, good Sir  
Nicholas:

Here is the King. [*Exit HEATH.*]

*Enter PHILIP*

*Philip.* Sir Nicholas tells you true,  
And you must look to Calais when I go.

*Mary.* Go? must you go, indeed—  
again—so soon?

Why, nature's licensed vagabond, the  
swallow,

That might live always in the sun's warm  
heart,

Stays longer here in our poor north than  
you:—

Knows where he nested—ever comes  
again.

*Philip.* And, Madam, so shall I.

*Mary.* O, will you? will you?  
I am faint with fear that you will come no  
more.

*Philip.* Ay, ay; but many voices call me  
hence.

*Mary.* Voices—I hear unhappy rumours  
—nay,

I say not, I believe. What voices call you  
Dearer than mine that should be dearest  
to you?

Alas, my Lord! what voices and how  
many?

*Philip.* The voices of Castille and  
Aragon,  
Granada, Naples, Sicily, and Milan,—  
The voices of Franche-Comté, and the  
Netherlands,  
The voices of Peru and Mexico,  
Tunis, and Oran, and the Philippines,  
And all the fair spice-islands of the East.

*Mary (admiringly).* You are the mightiest  
monarch upon earth,  
I but a little Queen: and, so indeed,  
Need you the more.

*Philip.* A little Queen! but when  
I came to wed your majesty, Lord Howard,  
Sending an insolent shot that dash'd the  
seas

Upon us, made us lower our kingly flag  
To yours of England.

*Mary.* Howard is all English!  
There is no king, not were he ten times  
king,  
Ten times our husband, but must lower  
his flag

To that of England in the seas of England.

*Philip.* Is that your answer?

*Mary.* Being Queen of England,  
I have none other.

*Philip.* So.

*Mary.* But wherefore not  
Helm the huge vessel of your state, my  
liege,  
Here by the side of her who loves you  
most?

*Philip.* No, Madam, no! a candle in the  
sun

Is all but smoke—a star beside the moon  
Is all but lost; your people will not crown  
me—

Your people are as cheerless as your clime;  
Hate me and mine: witness the brawls, the  
gibbets.

Here swings a Spaniard—there an English-  
man;

The peoples are unlike as their com-  
plexion;

Yet will I be your swallow and return—  
But now I cannot bide.

*Mary.* Not to help *me*?  
They hate *me* also for my love to you,  
My Philip; and these judgments on the  
land—

Harvestless autumns, horrible agues,  
plague—

*Philip.* The blood and sweat of heretics  
at the stake

Is God's best dew upon the barren field.

Burn more!

*Mary.* I will, I will; and you will stay?  
*Philip.* Have I not said? Madam, I came  
to sue

→ Your Council and yourself to declare war.

*Mary.* Sir, there are many English in  
your ranks

To help your battle.

*Philip.* So far, good. I say  
I came to sue your Council and yourself  
To declare war against the King of France.

*Mary.* Not to see me?

*Philip.* Ay, Madam, to see you.  
Unalterably and pesteringly fond! [*Aside.*  
But, soon or late you must have war with  
France;

King Henry warms your traitors at his  
hearth.

Carew is there, and Thomas Stafford there.  
Courtenay, belike—

*Mary.* A fool and featherhead!  
*Philip.* Ay, but they use his name. In  
brief, this Henry

Stirs up your land against you to the intent  
That you may lose your English heritage.  
And then, your Scottish namesake marry-  
ing

The Dauphin, he would weld France, Eng-  
land, Scotland,

Into one sword to hack at Spain and me.

*Mary.* And yet the Pope is now col-  
leagued with France;

You make your wars upon him down in  
Italy:—

Philip, can that be well?

*Philip.* Content you, Madam;  
You must abide my judgment, and my  
father's,

Who deems it a most just and holy war.

The Pope would cast the Spaniard out of  
Naples:

He calls us worse than Jews, Moors,  
Saracens.

The Pope has pushed his horns beyond  
his mitre—

Beyond his province. Now,



Duke Alva will but touch him on the horns,  
And he withdraws; and of his holy head—  
For Alva is true son of the true church—  
No hair is harm'd. Will you not help me  
here?

*Mary.* Alas! the Council will not hear of  
war.

They say your wars are not the wars of  
England.

They will not lay more taxes on a land  
So hunger-nipt and wretched; and you  
know

The crown is poor. We have given the  
church-lands back:

The nobles would not; nay, they clapt  
their hands

Upon their swords when ask'd; and there-  
fore God

Is hard upon the people. What's to be  
done?

Sir, I will move them in your cause again,  
And we will raise us loans and subsidies  
Among the merchants; and Sir Thomas  
Gresham

Will aid us. There is Antwerp and the  
Jews.

*Philip.* Madam, my thanks.

*Mary.* And you will stay your  
going?

*Philip.* And further to discourage and  
lay lame

The plots of France, altho' you love her  
not,

You must proclaim Elizabeth your heir.  
She stands between you and the Queen of  
Scots.

*Mary.* The Queen of Scots at least is  
Catholic.

*Philip.* Ay, Madam, Catholic; but I will  
not have

The King of France the King of England  
too.

*Mary.* But she's a heretic, and, when I  
am gone,

Brings the new learning back.

*Philip.* It must be done.

You must proclaim Elizabeth your heir.

*Mary.* Then it is done; but you will stay  
your going

Somewhat beyond your settled purpose?

*Philip.* No!

*Mary.* What, not one day?

*Philip.* You beat upon the rock.

*Mary.* And I am broken there.

*Philip.* Is this a place  
To wait in, Madam? what! a public hall.  
Go in, I pray you.

*Mary.* Do not seem so changed.  
Say go; but only say it lovingly.

*Philip.* You do mistake. I am not one to  
change.

I never loved you more.

*Mary.* Sire, I obey you.

Come quickly.

*Philip.* Ay. [Exit MARY.]

Enter COUNT DE FERIA

*Feria* (*aside*). The Queen in tears!

*Philip.* Feria!

Hast thou not mark'd—come closer to  
mine ear—

How doubly aged this Queen of ours hath  
grown

Since she lost hope of bearing us a child?

*Feria.* Sire, if your Grace hath mark'd it,  
so have I.

*Philip.* Hast thou not likewise mark'd  
Elizabeth,

How fair and royal—like a Queen, indeed?

*Feria.* Allow me the same answer as  
before—

That if your Grace hath mark'd her, so  
have I.

*Philip.* Good, now; methinks my Queen  
is like enough

To leave me by and by.

*Feria.* To leave you, sire?

*Philip.* I mean not like to live. Eliza-  
beth—

To Philibert of Savoy, as you know,  
We meant to wed her; but I am not sure  
She will not serve me better—so my Queen  
Would leave me—as—my wife.

*Feria.* Sire, even so.

*Philip.* She will not have Prince Phili-  
bert of Savoy.

*Feria.* No, sire.

*Philip.* I have to pray you, some  
odd time,

To sound the Princess carelessly on this;  
Not as from me, but as your phantasy;  
And tell me how she takes it.

*Feria.* Sire, I will.

*Philip.* I am not certain but that Philibert  
Shall be the man; and I shall urge his  
suit

Upon the Queen, because I am not certain:  
You understand, *Feria*.

*Feria.* Sire, I do.

*Philip.* And if you be not secret in this  
matter,

You understand me there, too?

*Feria.* Sire, I do.

*Philip.* You must be sweet and supple,  
like a Frenchman.

She is none of those who loathe the honey-  
comb. [Exit *FERIA*.]

*Enter RENARD*

*Renard.* My liege, I bring you goodly  
tidings.

*Philip.* Well?

*Renard.* There will be war with France,  
at last, my liege;

Sir Thomas Stafford, a bull-headed ass,  
Sailing from France, with thirty English-  
men,

Hath taken Scarboro' Castle, north of  
York;

Proclaims himself protector, and affirms  
The Queen has forfeited her right to  
reign

By marriage with an alien—other things  
As idle; a weak Wyatt! Little doubt  
This buzz will soon be silenced; but the  
Council

(I have talk'd with some already) are for  
war.

This is the fifth conspiracy hatch'd in  
France;

They show their teeth upon it; and your  
Grace,

So you will take advice of mine, should  
stay

Yet for awhile, to shape and guide the  
event.

*Philip.* Good! *Renard*, I will stay then.

*Renard.* Also, sire,  
Might I not say—to please your wife, the  
Queen?

*Philip.* Ay, *Renard*, if you care to put  
it so. [Exit.

## SCENE II

*A Room in the Palace*

MARY, sitting: a rose in her hand. LADY  
CLARENCE. ALICE in the background.

*Mary.* Look! I have play'd with this  
poor rose so long  
I have broken off the head.

*Lady Clarence.* Your Grace hath been  
More merciful to many a rebel head  
That should have fallen, and may rise  
again.

*Mary.* There were not many hang'd for  
Wyatt's rising.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, not two hundred.

*Mary.* I could weep for them  
And her, and mine own self and all the  
world.

*Lady Clarence.* For her? for whom, your  
Grace?

*Enter USHER*

*Usher.* The Cardinal.

*Enter CARDINAL POLE. (MARY rises.)*

*Mary.* Reginald Pole, what news hath  
plagued thy heart?

What makes thy favour like the bloodless  
head

Fall'n on the block, and held up by the  
hair?

*Philip?*—

*Pole.* No, *Philip* is as warm in life  
As ever.

*Mary.* Ay, and then as cold as ever.

Is Calais taken?

*Pole.* Cousin, there hath chanced  
A sharper harm to England and to Rome,  
Than Calais taken. Julius the Third  
Was ever just, and mild, and father-like;  
But this new Pope Caraffa, Paul the Fourth,  
Not only reft me of that legateship

Which Julius gave me, and the legateship  
Annex'd to Canterbury—nay, but worse—  
And yet I must obey the Holy Father,  
And so must you, good cousin;—worse  
than all,

A passing bell toll'd in a dying ear—  
He hath cited me to Rome, for heresy,  
Before his Inquisition.

*Mary.* I knew it, cousin,  
But held from you all papers sent by Rome,  
That you might rest among us, till the  
Pope,

To compass which I wrote myself to Rome,  
Reversed his doom, and that you might  
not seem  
To disobey his Holiness.

*Pole.* He hates Philip;  
He is all Italian, and he hates the Spaniard;  
He cannot dream that *I* advised the war;  
He strikes thro' me at Philip and yourself.  
Nay, but I know it of old, he hates me too;  
So brands me in the stare of Christendom  
A heretic!

Now, even now, when bow'd before my  
time,  
The house half-ruin'd ere the lease be out;  
When I should guide the Church in peace  
at home,

After my twenty years of banishment,  
And all my lifelong labour to uphold  
The primacy—a heretic. Long ago,  
When I was ruler in the patrimony,  
I was too lenient to the Lutheran,  
And I and learned friends among ourselves  
Would freely canvass certain Lutheranisms.  
What then, he knew I was no Lutheran.  
A heretic!

He drew this shaft against me to the head,  
When it was thought I might be chosen  
Pope,

But then withdrew it. In full consistory,  
When I was made Archbishop, he ap-  
proved me.

And how should he have sent me Legate  
hither,

Deeming me heretic? and what heresy  
since?

But he was evermore mine enemy,  
And hates the Spaniard—fiery-choleric,  
A drinker of black, strong, volcanic wines,  
That ever make him fierier. I, a heretic?  
Your Highness knows that in pursuing  
heresy

I have gone beyond your late Lord Chan-  
cellor,—

He cried Enough! enough! before his  
death.—

Gone beyond him and mine own natural  
man

(It was God's cause); so far they call me  
now,

The scourge and butcher of their English  
church.

*Mary.* Have courage, your reward is  
Heaven itself.

*Pole.* They groan amen; they swarm into  
the fire

Like flies—for what? no dogma. They  
know nothing;

They burn for nothing.

*Mary.* You have done your best.

*Pole.* Have done my best, and as a faith-  
ful son,

That all day long hath wrought his father's  
work,

When back he comes at evening hath the  
door

Shut on him by the father whom he loved,  
His early follies cast into his teeth,

And the poor son turn'd out into the street  
To sleep, to die—I shall die of it, cousin.

*Mary.* I pray you be not so disconsolate;  
I still will do mine utmost with the Pope.  
Poor cousin!

Have not I been the fast friend of your life  
Since mine began, and it was thought we  
two

Might make one flesh, and cleave unto  
each other

As man and wife?

*Pole.* Ah, cousin, I remember  
How I would dandle you upon my knee  
At lisping-age. I watch'd you dancing once  
With your huge father; he look'd the  
Great Harry,

You but his cockboat; prettily you did it,  
And innocently. No—we were not made  
One flesh in happiness, no happiness here;  
But now we are made one flesh in misery;  
Our bridesmaids are not lovely—Dis-  
appointment,

Ingratitude, Injustice, Evil-tongue,  
Labour-in-vain.

*Mary.* Surely, not all in vain.

Peace, cousin, peace! I am sad at heart  
myself.

*Pole.* Our altar is a mound of dead men's  
clay,

Dug from the grave that yawns for us  
beyond;

And there is one Death stands behind the  
Groom,

And there is one Death stands behind the  
Bride—

*Mary.* Have you been looking at the  
'Dance of Death'?

*Pole.* No; but these libellous papers  
which I found

Strewn in your palace. Look you here—  
the Pope

Pointing at me with 'Pole, the heretic,  
Thou hast burnt others, do thou burn  
thyself,

Or I will burn thee;' and this other; see!—  
'We pray continually for the death

Of our accursed Queen and Cardinal Pole.'  
This last—I dare not read it her. [*Aside.*

*Mary.* Away!

Why do you bring me these?

I thought you knew me better. I never  
read,

I tear them; they come back upon my  
dreams.

The hands that write them should be burnt  
clean off

As Cranmer's, and the fiends that utter  
them

Tongue-torn with pincers, lash'd to death,  
or lie

Famishing in black cells, while famish'd  
rats

Eat them alive. Why do they bring me  
these?

Do you mean to drive me mad?

*Pole.* I had forgotten

How these poor libels trouble you. Your  
pardon,

Sweet cousin, and farewell! 'O bubble  
world,

Whose colours in a moment break and fly!'

Why, who said that? I know not—true  
enough!

[*Puts up the papers, all but the last,  
which falls. Exit POLE.*

*Alice.* If Cranmer's spirit were a mock-  
ing one,

And heard these two, there might be sport  
for him. [*Aside.*

*Mary.* Clarence, they hate me; even  
while I speak

There lurks a silent dagger, listening

In some dark closet, some long gallery,  
drawn,

And panting for my blood as I go by.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, Madam, there be  
loyal papers too,

And I have often found them.

*Mary.* Find me one!

*Lady Clarence.* Ay, Madam; but Sir  
Nicholas Heath, the Chancellor,  
Would see your Highness.

*Mary.* Wherefore should I see him?

*Lady Clarence.* Well, Madam, he may  
bring you news from Philip.

*Mary.* So, Clarence.

*Lady Clarence.* Let me first put up  
your hair;

It tumbles all abroad.

*Mary.* And the gray dawn  
Of an old age that never will be mine  
Is all the clearer seen. No, no; what  
matters?

Forlorn I am, and let me look forlorn.

*Enter SIR NICHOLAS HEATH*

*Heath.* I bring your Majesty such  
grievous news

I grieve to bring it. Madam, Calais is taken.

*Mary.* What traitor spoke? Here, let my  
cousin Pole

Seize him and burn him for a Lutheran.

*Heath.* Her Highness is unwell. I will  
retire.

*Lady Clarence.* Madam, your Chan-  
cellor, Sir Nicholas Heath.

*Mary.* Sir Nicholas! I am stunn'd—  
Nicholas Heath?

Methought some traitor smote me on the  
head.

What said you, my good Lord, that our  
brave English

Had sallied out from Calais and driven  
back

The Frenchmen from their trenches?

*Heath.* Alas! no.

That gateway to the mainland over which  
Our flag hath floated for two hundred  
years

Is France again.

*Mary.* So; but it is not lost—

Not yet. Send out: let England as of old  
Rise lionlike, strike hard and deep into

The prey they are rending from her—ay,  
and rend

The renders too. Send out, send out, and  
make

Musters in all the counties; gather all  
From sixteen years to sixty; collect the  
fleet;

Let every craft that carries sail and gun  
Steer toward Calais. Guisnes is not taken  
yet?

*Heath.* Guisnes is not taken yet.

*Mary.* There yet is hope.

*Heath.* Ah, Madam, but your people are  
so cold;

I do much fear that England will not care.  
Methinks there is no manhood left among  
us.

*Mary.* Send out; I am too weak to stir  
abroad:

Tell my mind to the Council—to the Par-  
liament:

Proclaim it to the winds. Thou art cold  
thyself

To babble of their coldness. O would I  
were

My father for an hour! Away now—Quick!  
[*Exit HEATH.*]

I hoped I had served God with all my  
might!

It seems I have not. Ah! much heresy  
Shelter'd in Calais. Saints, I have rebuilt  
Your shrines, set up your broken images;  
Be comfortable to me. Suffer not  
That my brief reign in England be de-  
famed

Thro' all her angry chronicles hereafter  
By loss of Calais. Grant me Calais. Philip,  
We have made war upon the Holy Father  
All for your sake: what good could come  
of that?

*Lady Clarence.* No, Madam, not against  
the Holy Father;

You did but help King Philip's war with  
France,

Your troops were never down in Italy.

*Mary.* I am a byword. Heretic and rebel  
Point at me and make merry. Philip gone!  
And Calais gone! Time that I were gone  
too!

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, if the fetid gutter  
had a voice

And cried I was not clean, what should I  
care?

Or you, for heretic cries? And I believe,  
Spite of your melancholy Sir Nicholas,  
Your England is as loyal as myself.

*Mary* (*seeing the paper dropt by POLE*).

There! there! another paper! Said  
you not

Many of these were loyal? Shall I try  
If this be one of such?

*Lady Clarence.* Let it be, let it be.

God pardon me! I have never yet found  
one. [*Aside.*]

*Mary* (*reads*). 'Your people hate you as  
your husband hates you.'

Clarence, Clarence, what have I done?  
what sin

Beyond all grace, all pardon? Mother of  
God,

Thou knowest never woman meant so  
well,

And fared so ill in this disastrous world.  
My people hate me and desire my death.

*Lady Clarence.* No, Madam, no.

*Mary.* My husband hates me, and  
desires my death.

*Lady Clarence.* No, Madam; these are  
libels.

*Mary.* I hate myself, and I desire my  
death.

*Lady Clarence.* Long live your Majesty!  
Shall Alice sing you

One of her pleasant songs? Alice, my  
child,

Bring us your lute (*ALICE goes*). They say  
the gloom of Saul

Was lighten'd by young David's harp.

*Mary.* Too young!

And never knew a Philip.

*Re-enter ALICE*

Give me the lute.

He hates me!

(*She sings*)

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!  
Beauty passes like a breath and love is lost in  
loathing:

Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but say the  
world is nothing—

Low, lute, low!

Love will hover round the flowers when they  
first awaken;  
Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be over-  
taken;  
Low, my lute! oh low, my lute! we fade and are  
forsaken—

Low, dear lute, low!

Take it away! not low enough for me!

*Alice.* Your Grace hath a low voice.

*Mary.* How dare you say it?  
Even for that he hates me. A low voice  
Lost in a wilderness where none can hear!  
A voice of shipwreck on a shoreless sea!  
A low voice from the dust and from the  
grave

(*Sitting on the ground*). There, am I low  
enough now?

*Alice.* Good Lord! how grim and ghastly  
looks her Grace,

With both her knees drawn upward to her  
chin.

There was an old-world tomb beside my  
father's,

And this was open'd, and the dead were  
found

Sitting, and in this fashion; she looks a  
corpse.

*Enter* LADY MAGDALEN DACRES

*Lady Magdalen.* Madam, the Count de  
Feria waits without,

In hopes to see your Highness.

*Lady Clarence* (*pointing to MARY*). Wait  
he must—

Her trance again. She neither sees nor hears,  
And may not speak for hours.

*Lady Magdalen.* Unhappiest  
Of Queens and wives and women!

*Alice* (*in the foreground with LADY MAG-  
DALEN*). And all along  
Of Philip.

*Lady Magdalen.* Not so loud! Our  
Clarence there

Sees ever such an aureole round the Queen,  
It gilds the greatest wronger of her peace,  
Who stands the nearest to her.

*Alice.* Ay, this Philip;  
I used to love the Queen with all my  
heart—

God help me, but methinks I love her less  
For such a dotage upon such a man.

I would I were as tall and strong as you.

*Lady Magdalen.* I seem half-shamed at  
times to be so tall.

*Alice.* You are the stateliest deer in all  
the herd—

Beyond his aim—but I am small and  
scandalous,

And love to hear bad tales of Philip.

*Lady Magdalen.* Why?

I never heard him utter worse of you  
Than that you were low-statured.

*Alice.* Does he think

Low stature is low nature, or all women  
Low as his own?

*Lady Magdalen.* There you strike in the  
nail.

This coarseness is a want of phantasy.

It is the low man thinks the woman low;  
Sin is too dull to see beyond himself.

*Alice.* Ah, Magdalen, sin is bold as well  
as dull.

How dared he?

*Lady Magdalen.* Stupid soldiers oft are  
bold.

Poor lads, they see not what the general  
sees,

A risk of utter ruin. I am *not*

Beyond his aim, or was not.

*Alice.* Who? Not you?

Tell, tell me; save my credit with myself.

*Lady Magdalen.* I never breathed it to a  
bird in the eaves,

Would not for all the stars and maiden  
moon

Our drooping Queen should know! In  
Hampton Court

My window look'd upon the corridor;

And I was robing;—this poor throat of  
mine,

Barer than I should wish a man to see it,—  
When he we speak of drove the window  
back,

And, like a thief, push'd in his royal hand;  
But by God's providence a good stout staff  
Lay near me; and you know me strong of  
arm;

I do believe I lamed his Majesty's  
For a day or two, tho', give the Devil his  
due,

I never found he bore me any spite.

*Alice.* I would she could have wedded  
that poor youth,

# QUEEN MARY

ACT V

My Lord of Devon—light enough, God knows,  
And mixt with Wyatt's rising—and the boy  
Not out of him—but neither cold, coarse,  
cruel,  
And more than all—no Spaniard.

*Lady Clarence.* Not so loud.  
Lord Devon, girls! what are you whisper-  
ing here?

*Alice.* Probing an old state-secret—how  
it chanced  
That this young Earl was sent on foreign  
travel,  
Not lost his head.

*Lady Clarence.* There was no proof  
against him.

*Alice.* Nay, Madam; did not Gardiner  
intercept

A letter which the Count de Noailles wrote  
To that dead traitor Wyatt, with full proof  
Of Courtenay's treason? What became of  
that?

*Lady Clarence.* Some say that Gardiner,  
out of love for him,  
Burnt it, and some relate that it was lost  
When Wyatt sack'd the Chancellor's house  
in Southwark.

Let dead things rest.

*Alice.* Ay, and with him who died  
Alone in Italy.

*Lady Clarence.* Much changed, I hear,  
Had put off levity and put graveness on.  
The foreign courts report him in his  
manner

Noble as his young person and old shield.  
It might be so—but all is over now;  
He caught a chill in the lagoons of Venice,  
And died in Padua.

*Mary (looking up suddenly).* Died in the  
true faith?

*Lady Clarence.* Ay, Madam, happily.  
*Mary.* Happier he than I.

*Lady Magdalen.* It seems her Highness  
hath awaken'd. Think you  
That I might dare to tell her that the  
Count—

*Mary.* I will see no man hence for ever-  
more,

Saving my confessor and my cousin Pole.  
*Lady Magdalen.* It is the Count de  
Feria, my dear lady.

*Mary.* What Count?  
*Lady Magdalen.* The Count de Feria,  
from his Majesty

King Philip.  
*Mary.* Philip! quick! loop up my hair!  
Throw cushions on that seat, and make it  
throne-like.

Arrange my dress—the gorgeous Indian  
shawl  
That Philip brought me in our happy  
days!—

That covers all. So—am I somewhat  
Queenlike,  
Bride of the mightiest sovereign upon  
earth?

*Lady Clarence.* Ay, so your Grace would  
bide a moment yet.

*Mary.* No, no, he brings a letter. I may  
die

Before I read it. Let me see him at once.

*Enter* COUNT DE FERIA (*kneels*)

*Feria.* I trust your Grace is well. (*Aside*)  
How her hand burns!

*Mary.* I am not well, but it will better  
me,  
Sir Count, to read the letter which you  
bring.

*Feria.* Madam, I bring no letter.

*Mary.* How! no letter?

*Feria.* His Highness is so vex'd with  
strange affairs—

*Mary.* That his own wife is no affair of  
his.

*Feria.* Nay, Madam, nay! he sends his  
veriest love,  
And says, he will come quickly.

*Mary.* Doth he, indeed?  
You, sir, do you remember what you said  
When last you came to England?

*Feria.* Madam, I brought  
My King's congratulations; it was hoped  
Your Highness was once more in happy  
state

To give him an heir male.

*Mary.* Sir, you said more;  
You said he would come quickly. I had  
horses

On all the road from Dover, day and night;  
On all the road from Harwich, night and  
day;

But the child came not, and the husband  
came not;  
And yet he will come quickly. . . . Thou  
hast learnt

Thy lesson, and I mine. There is no need  
For Philip so to shame himself again.

Return,  
And tell him that I know he comes no more.  
Tell him at last I know his love is dead,  
And that I am in state to bring forth  
death—

Thou art commission'd to Elizabeth,  
And not to me!

*Feria.* Mere compliments and wishes.  
But shall I take some message from your  
Grace?

*Mary.* Tell her to come and close my  
dying eyes,  
And wear my crown, and dance upon my  
grave.

*Feria.* Then I may say your Grace will  
see your sister?

Your Grace is too low-spirited. Air and  
sunshine.

I would we had you, Madam, in our warm  
Spain.

You droop in your dim London.

*Mary.* Have him away!  
I sicken of his readiness.

*Lady Clarence.* My Lord Count,  
Her Highness is too ill for colloquy.

*Feria* (kneels, and kisses her hand). I wish  
her Highness better. (Aside) How her  
hand burns! [Exeunt.

## SCENE III

*A House near London*

ELIZABETH, STEWARD OF THE  
HOUSEHOLD, ATTENDANTS

*Elizabeth.* There's half an angel wrong'd  
in your account;

Methinks I am all angel, that I bear it  
Without more ruffling. Cast it o'er again.

*Steward.* I were whole devil if I wrong'd  
you Madam. [Exit STEWARD.

*Attendant.* The Count de Feria, from  
the King of Spain.

*Elizabeth.* Ah!—let him enter. Nay, you  
need not go: [To her LADIES.

Remain within the chamber, but apart.  
We'll have no private conference. Wel-  
come to England!

*Enter FERIA*

*Feria.* Fair island star!

*Elizabeth.* I shine! What else,

Sir Count?

*Feria.* As far as France, and into Philip's  
heart.

My King would know if you be fairly  
served,

And lodged, and treated.

*Elizabeth.* You see the lodging, sir,  
I am well-served, and am in everything  
Most loyal and most grateful to the Queen.

*Feria.* You should be grateful to my  
master, too.

He spoke of this; and unto him you owe  
That Mary hath acknowledged you her  
heir.

*Elizabeth.* No, not to her nor him; but  
to the people,

Who know my right, and love me, as I love  
The people! whom God aid!

*Feria.* You will be Queen,  
And, were I Philip—

*Elizabeth.* Wherefore pause you—  
what?

*Feria.* Nay, but I speak from mine own  
self, not him;

Your royal sister cannot last; your hand  
Will be much coveted! What a delicate  
one!

Our Spanish ladies have none such—and  
there,

Were you in Spain, this fine fair gossamer  
gold—

Like sun-gilt breathings on a frosty  
dawn—

That hovers round your shoulder—

*Elizabeth.* Is it so fine?  
Troth, some have said so.

*Feria.* —would be deemed a miracle.

*Elizabeth.* Your Philip hath gold hair  
and golden beard;

There must be ladies many with hair like  
mine.

*Feria.* Some few of Gothic blood have  
golden hair,

But none like yours.



# QUEEN MARY

ACT V

*Elizabeth.* I am happy you approve it.

*Feria.* But as to Philip and your Grace—consider,—

If such a one as you should match with Spain,

What hinders but that Spain and England join'd,

Should make the mightiest empire earth has known.

Spain would be England on her seas, and England

Mistress of the Indies.

*Elizabeth.* It may chance, that England

Will be the Mistress of the Indies yet, Without the help of Spain.

*Feria.* Impossible;

Except you put Spain down.

Wide of the mark ev'n for a madman's dream.

*Elizabeth.* Perhaps; but we have seamen. Count de Feria,

I take it that the King hath spoken to you; But is Don Carlos such a goodly match?

*Feria.* Don Carlos, Madam, is but twelve years old.

*Elizabeth.* Ay, tell the King that I will muse upon it;

He is my good friend, and I would keep him so;

But—he would have me Catholic of Rome, And that I scarce can be; and, *sir*, till now

My sister's marriage, and my father's marriages,

Make me full fain to live and die a maid.

But I am much beholden to your King.

Have you aught else to tell me?

*Feria.* Nothing, Madam,

Save that methought I gather'd from the Queen

That she would see your Grace before she—died.

*Elizabeth.* God's death! and wherefore spake you not before?

We dally with our lazy moments here,

And hers are number'd. Horses there, without!

I am much beholden to the King, your master.

Why did you keep me prating? Horses, there! [*Exit ELIZABETH, etc.*]

*Feria.* So from a clear sky falls the thunderbolt!

Don Carlos? Madam, if you marry Philip, Then I and he will snaffle your 'God's death,'

And break your paces in, and make you tame;

God's death, forsooth—you do not know King Philip. [*Exit.*]

## SCENE IV

*London. Before the Palace*

*A light burning within. VOICES of the night passing*

*First.* Is not yon light in the Queen's chamber?

*Second.* Ay,

They say she's dying.

*First.* So is Cardinal Pole

May the great angels join their wings, and make

Down for their heads to heaven!

*Second.* Amen. Come on.

[*Exeunt.*]

## TWO OTHERS

*First.* There's the Queen's light. I hear she cannot live.

*Second.* God curse her and her Legate! Gardiner burns

Already; but to pay them full in kind, The hottest hold in all the devil's den

Were but a sort of winter; *sir*, in Guernsey, I watch'd a woman burn; and in her agony

The mother came upon her—a child was born—

And, *sir*, they hurl'd it back into the fire, That, being but baptized in fire, the babe

Might be in fire for ever. Ah, good neighbour,

There should be something fierier than fire To yield them their deserts.

*First.* Amen to all

Your wish, and further.

*A Third Voice.* Deserts! Amen to what? Whose deserts? Yours? You have a gold

ring on your finger, and soft raiment about your body; and is not the woman up

yonder sleeping after all she has done, in peace and quietness, on a soft bed, in a

closed room, with light, fire, physic, tendance; and I have seen the true men of Christ lying famine-dead by scores, and under no ceiling but the cloud that wept on them, not for them.

*First.* Friend, tho' so late, it is not safe to preach.

You had best go home. What are you?

*Third.* What am I? One who cries continually with sweat and tears to the Lord God that it would please Him out of His infinite love to break down all kingship and queenship, all priesthood and prelacy; to cancel and abolish all bonds of human allegiance, all the magistracy, all the nobles, and all the wealthy; and to send us again, according to His promise, the one King, the Christ, and all things in common, as in the day of the first church, when Christ Jesus was King.

*First.* If ever I heard a madman,—let's away!

Why, you long-winded—— Sir, you go beyond me.

I pride myself on being moderate.

Good night! Go home. Besides, you curse so loud,

The watch will hear you. Get you home at once. *[Exeunt.]*

## SCENE V

*London. A Room in the Palace*

*A Gallery on one side. The moonlight streaming through a range of windows on the wall opposite. MARY, LADY CLARENCE, LADY MAGDALEN DACRES, ALICE. QUEEN pacing the Gallery. A writing-table in front. QUEEN comes to the table and writes and goes again, pacing the Gallery.*

*Lady Clarence.* Mine eyes are dim: what hath she written? read.

*Alice.* 'I am dying, Philip; come to me.'

*Lady Magdalen.* There—up and down, poor lady, up and down.

*Alice.* And how her shadow crosses one by one

The moonlight casements pattern'd on the wall,

Following her like her sorrow. She turns again.

*[QUEEN sits and writes, and goes again.]*

*Lady Clarence.* What hath she written now?

*Alice.* Nothing; but 'come, come, come,' and all awry,

And blotted by her tears. This cannot last.

*[QUEEN returns.]*

*Mary.* I whistle to the bird has broken cage,

And all in vain. *[Sitting down.]*

Calais gone—Guineses gone, too—and Philip gone!

*Lady Clarence.* Dear Madam, Philip is but at the wars;

I cannot doubt but that he comes again;

And he is with you in a measure still.

I never look'd upon so fair a likeness

As your great King in armour there, his hand Upon his helmet.

*[Pointing to the portrait of PHILIP on the wall.]*

*Mary.* Doth he not look noble?

I had heard of him in battle over seas,

And I would have my warrior all in arms.

He said it was not courtly to stand helmeted

Before the Queen. He had his gracious moment,

Altho' you'll not believe me. How he smiles As if he loved me yet!

*Lady Clarence.* And so he does.

*Mary.* He never loved me—nay, he could not love me.

It was his father's policy against France.

I am eleven years older than he, Poor boy! *[Weeps.]*

*Alice.* That was a lusty boy of twenty-seven; *[Aside.]*

Poor enough in God's grace!

*Mary.* —And all in vain!

The Queen of Scots is married to the Dauphin,

And Charles, the lord of this low world, is gone;

And all his wars and wisdoms past away; And in a moment I shall follow him.

*Lady Clarence.* Nay, dearest Lady, see your good physician.

*Mary.* Drugs—but he knows they cannot help me—says

That rest is all—tells me I must not think—

That I must rest—I shall rest by and by.  
Catch the wild cat, cage him, and when he  
springs

And maims himself against the bars, say  
'rest':

Why, you must kill him if you would have  
him rest—

Dead or alive you cannot make him happy.

*Lady Clarence.* Your Majesty has lived  
so pure a life,

And done such mighty things by Holy  
Church,

I trust that God will make you happy yet.

*Mary.* What is the strange thing happi-  
ness? Sit down here:

Tell me thine happiest hour.

*Lady Clarence.* I will, if that  
May make your Grace forget yourself a  
little.

There runs a shallow brook across our  
field

For twenty miles, where the black crow  
flies five,

And doth so bound and babble all the way  
As if itself were happy. It was May-time,  
And I was walking with the man I loved.  
I loved him, but I thought I was not loved.  
And both were silent, letting the wild  
brook

Speak for us—till he stoop'd and gather'd  
one

From out a bed of thick forget-me-nots,  
Look'd hard and sweet at me, and gave it  
me.

I took it, tho' I did not know I took it,  
And put it in my bosom, and all at once  
I felt his arms about me, and his lips—

*Mary.* O God! I have been too slack,  
too slack;

There are Hot Gospellers even among our  
guards—

Nobles we dared not touch. We have but  
burnt

The heretic priest, workmen, and women  
and children.

Wet, famine, ague, fever, storm, wreck,  
wrath,—

We have so play'd the coward; but by  
God's grace,

We'll follow Philip's leading, and set up  
The Holy Office here—garner the wheat,

And burn the tares with unquenchable  
fire!

Burn!—

Fie, what a savour! tell the cooks to close  
The doors of all the offices below.

Latimer!

Sir, we are private with our women here—

Ever a rough, blunt, and uncourtly  
fellow—

Thou light a torch that never will go out!

'Tis out—mine flames. Women, the Holy  
Father

Has ta'en the legateship from our cousin  
Pole—

Was that well done? and poor Pole pines  
of it,

As I do, to the death. I am but a woman,  
I have no power.—Ah, weak and meek old  
man,

Seven-fold dishonour'd even in the sight  
Of thine own sectaries—No, no. No  
pardon!—

Why that was false: there is the right hand  
still

Beckons me hence.

Sir, you were burnt for heresy, not for  
treason,

Remember that! 'twas I and Bonner did it,  
And Pole; we are three to one—Have you  
found mercy there,

Grant it me here: and see, he smiles and  
goes,

Gentle as in life.

*Alice.* Madam, who goes? King Philip?

*Mary.* No, Philip comes and goes, but  
never goes.

Women, when I am dead,

Open my heart, and there you will find  
written

Two names, Philip and Calais; open his,—  
So that he have one,—

You will find Philip only, policy, policy,—  
Ay, worse than that—not one hour true  
to me!

Foul maggots crawling in a fester'd vice!

Adulterous to the very heart of Hell.

Hast thou a knife?

*Alice.* Ay, Madam, but o' God's  
mercy—

*Mary.* Fool, think'st thou I would peril  
mine own soul

By slaughter of the body? I could not, girl,  
Not this way—callous with a constant  
stripe,

Unwoundable. The knife!

*Alice.* Take heed, take heed!

The blade is keen as death.

*Mary.* This Philip shall not  
Stare in upon me in my haggardness;  
Old, miserable, diseased,  
Incapable of children. Come thou down.

[*Cuts out the picture and throws it down.*  
Lie there. (*Wails*) O God, I have kill'd my  
Philip!

*Alice.* No,  
Madam, you have but cut the canvas out;  
We can replace it.

*Mary.* All is well then; rest—  
I will to rest; he said, I must have rest.

[*Cries of 'Elizabeth' in the street.*  
A cry! What's that? Elizabeth? revolt?  
A new Northumberland, another Wyatt?  
I'll fight it on the threshold of the grave.

*Lady Clarence.* Madam, your royal sister  
comes to see you.

*Mary.* I will not see her.  
Who knows if Boleyn's daughter be my  
sister?

I will see none except the priest. Your arm.  
[*To LADY CLARENCE.*

O Saint of Aragon, with that sweet worn  
smile

Among thy patient wrinkles—Help me  
hence. [*Exeunt.*

*The PRIEST passes. Enter ELIZABETH and  
SIR WILLIAM CECIL*

*Elizabeth.* Good counsel yours—

No one in waiting? still,  
As if the chamberlain were Death himself!  
The room she sleeps in—is not this the  
way?

No, that way there are voices. Am I too  
late?

Cecil . . . God guide me lest I lose the way.  
[*Exit ELIZABETH.*

*Cecil.* Many points weather'd, many  
perilous ones,  
At last a harbour opens; but therein  
Sunk rocks—they need fine steering—  
much it is

To be nor mad, nor bigot—have a mind—

Nor let Priests' talk, or dream of worlds  
to be,

Miscolour things about her—sudden  
touches

For him, or him—sunk rocks; no pas-  
sionate faith—

But—if let be—balance and compromise;  
Brave, wary, sane to the heart of her—a

Tudor  
School'd by the shadow of death—a

Boleyn, too,  
Glancing across the Tudor—not so well.

*Enter ALICE*

How is the good Queen now?

*Alice.* Away from Philip.  
Back in her childhood—prattling to her  
mother

Of her betrothal to the Emperor Charles,  
And childlike-jealous of him again—and  
once

She thank'd her father sweetly for his book  
Against that godless German. Ah, those  
days

Were happy. It was never merry world  
In England, since the Bible came among  
us.

*Cecil.* And who says that?

*Alice.* It is a saying among the Catholics.

*Cecil.* It never will be merry world in  
England,

Till all men have their Bible, rich and poor.

*Alice.* The Queen is dying, or you dare  
not say it.

*Enter ELIZABETH*

*Elizabeth.* The Queen is dead.

*Cecil.* Then here she stands! my homage.

*Elizabeth.* She knew me, and acknow-  
ledged me her heir,

Pray'd me to pay her debts, and keep the  
Faith;

Then claspt the cross, and pass'd away in  
peace.

I left her lying still and beautiful,  
More beautiful than in life. Why would  
you vex yourself,

Poor sister? Sir, I swear I have no heart  
To be your Queen. To reign is restless  
fence,

# QUEEN MARY

ACT V

Tierce, quart, and trickery. Peace is with  
the dead.

Her life was winter, for her spring was  
nipt:

And she loved much: pray God she be  
forgiven.

*Cecil.* Peace with the dead, who never  
were at peace!

Yet she loved one so much—I needs must  
say—

That never English monarch dying left  
England so little.

*Elizabeth.* But with Cecil's aid

And others, if our person be secured  
From traitor stabs—we will make England  
great.

*Enter PAGET, and other LORDS OF THE  
COUNCIL, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, etc.*

*Lords.* God save Elizabeth, the Queen  
of England!

*Bagenhall.* God save the Crown! the  
Papacy is no more.

*Paget (aside).* Are we so sure of that?

*Acclamation.* God save the Queen!

# HAROLD

## A DRAMA

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON

*Viceroy and Governor-General of India*

MY DEAR LORD LYTTON,—After old-world records—such as the Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou,—Edward Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest, and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his 'Harold' to my father's brother; allow me to dedicate my 'Harold' to yourself.

A. TENNYSON.

### SHOW-DAY AT BATTLE ABBEY, 1876

A GARDEN here—May breath and bloom of spring—  
The cuckoo yonder from an English clm  
Crying 'with my false egg I overwhelm  
The native nest:' and fancy hears the ring  
Of harness, and that deathful arrow sing,  
And Saxon battleaxe clang on Norman helm.  
Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm:  
Here fought, here fell, our Norman-slander'd king.  
O Garden blossoming out of English blood!  
O strange hate-healer Time! We stroll and stare  
Where might made right eight hundred years ago;  
Might, right? ay good, so all things make for good—  
But he and he, if soul be soul, are where  
Each stands full face with all he did below.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

SIGAND, *created Archbishop of Canterbury by the Antipope Benedict.*

ALDRED, *Archbishop of York.*

THE NORMAN BISHOP OF LONDON.

HAROLD, *Earl of Wessex, afterwards King of England*

TOSTIG, *Earl of Northumbria*

GUTH, *Earl of East Anglia*

LEOFWIN, *Earl of Kent and Essex*

WULFNOTH

COUNT WILLIAM OF NORMANDY.

WILLIAM MALET, *a Norman Noble.*<sup>1</sup>

EDWIN, *Earl of Mercia*

MORCAR, *Earl of Northumbria after Tostig*

GAMEL, *a Northumbrian Thane.*

ROLF, *a Ponthieu Fisherman.*

OSGOD and ATELTRIC, *Canons from Waltham.*

THE QUEEN, *Edward the Confessor's Wife, Daughter of Godwin.*

ALDWYTH, *Daughter of Alfgar and Widow of Gruffyth, King of Wales.*

EDITH, *Ward of King Edward.*

WILLIAM RUFUS.

} Sons of Alfgar of  
Mercia.

GUY, *Count of Ponthieu.*

HUGH MARGOT, *a Norman Monk.*

Courtiers, Earls and Thanes, Men-at-Arms, Canons of Waltham, Fishermen, etc.

<sup>1</sup> . . . quidam partim Normannus et Anglus  
Compteur Herald. (*Guy of Amiens*, 587.)

ACT I

SCENE I

*London. The King's Palace*

*(A comet seen through the open window)*

ALDWYTH, GAMEL, COURTIERs talking  
together

*First Courtier.* Lo! there once more—  
this is the seventh night!  
Yon grimly-glaring, treble-brandish'd  
scourge  
Of England!

*Second Courtier.* Horrible!

*First Courtier.* Look you, there's a star  
That dances in it as mad with agony!

*Thrd Courtier.* Ay, like a spirit in Hell  
who skips and flies  
To right and left, and cannot scape the  
flame.

*Second Courtier.* Steam'd upward from  
the undescendible  
Abysm.

*First Courtier.* Or floated downward  
from the throne  
Of God Almighty.

*Aldwyth.* Gamel, son of Orm,  
What thinkest thou this means?

*Gamel.* War, my dear lady!

*Aldwyth.* Doth this affright thee?

*Gamel.* Mightily, my dear lady!  
*Aldwyth.* Stand by me then, and look  
upon my face,  
Not on the comet.

*(Enter MORCAR)*

*Morcar.* It glares in heaven, it flares  
upon the Thames,  
The people are as thick as bees below,  
They hum like bees,—they cannot speak—  
for awe;

Look to the skies, then to the river, strike  
Their hearts, and hold their babies up to it.  
I think that they would Molochize them too,  
To have the heavens clear.

*Aldwyth.* They fright not me.

*(Enter LEOFWIN, after him GURTH)*

Ask thou Lord Leofwin what he thinks of  
this!

*Morcar.* Lord Leofwin, dost thou be-  
lieve, that these

Three rods of blood-red fire up yonder  
mean

The doom of England and the wrath of  
Heaven?

*Bishop of London (passing).* Did ye not  
cast with bestial violence

Our holy Norman bishops down from all  
Their thrones in England? I alone remain.  
Why should not Heaven be wroth?

*Leofwin.* With us, or thee?

*Bishop of London.* Did ye not outlaw  
your archbishop Robert,  
Robert of Jumiéges—well-nigh murder  
him too?

Is there no reason for the wrath of Heaven?

*Leofwin.* Why then the wrath of Heaven  
hath three tails,  
The devil only one.

*[Exit BISHOP OF LONDON.]*

*(Enter ARCHBISHOP STIGAND)*

Ask our Archbishop.  
Stigand should know the purposes of  
Heaven.

*Stigand.* Not I. I cannot read the face of  
heaven;

Perhaps our vines will grow the better  
for it.

*Leofwin (laughing).* He can but read the  
king's face on his coins.

*Stigand.* Ay, ay, young lord, *there* the  
king's face is power.

*Gurth.* O father, mock not at a public fear,  
But tell us, is this pendent hell in heaven  
A harm to England?

*Stigand.* Ask it of King Edward!  
And he may tell thee, I am a harm to  
England.

Old uncanonical Stigand—ask of *me*  
Who had my pallium from an Antipope!  
Not he the man—for in our windy world  
What's up is faith, what's down is heresy.  
Our friends, the Normans, help to shake  
his chair.

I have a Norman fever on me, son,  
And cannot answer sanely . . . What it  
means?

Ask our broad Earl.

*[Pointing to HAROLD, who enters.]*

*Harold (seeing GAMEL).* Hail, Gamel, son of Orm!

Albeit no rolling stone, my good friend Gamel,

Thou hast rounded since we met. Thy life at home

Is easier than mine here. Look! am I not Work-wan, flesh-fallen?

*Gamel.* Art thou sick, good Earl?

*Harold.* Sick as an autumn swallow for a voyage,

Sick for an idle week of hawk and hound Beyond the seas—a change! When camest thou hither?

*Gamel.* To-day, good Earl.

*Harold.* Is the North quiet, Gamel?

*Gamel.* Nay, there be murmurs, for thy brother breaks us

With over-taxing—quiet, ay, as yet— Nothing as yet.

*Harold.* Stand by him, mine old friend, Thou art a great voice in Northumberland! Advise him: speak him sweetly, he will hear thee.

He is passionate but honest. Stand thou by him!

More talk of this to-morrow, if yon weird sign

Not blast us in our dreams.—Well, father Stigand—

[*To STIGAND, who advances to him.*

*Stigand (pointing to the comet).* War there, my son? is that the doom of England?

*Harold.* Why not the doom of all the world as well?

For all the world sees it as well as England.

These meteors came and went before our day,

Not harming any: it threatens us no more Than French or Norman. War? the worst that follows

Things that seem jerk'd out of the common rut

Of Nature is the hot religious fool,

Who, seeing war in heaven, for heaven's credit

Makes it on earth: but look, where Edward draws

A faint foot hither, leaning upon Tostig.

He hath learnt to love our Tostig much of late.

*Leofwin.* And he hath learnt, despite the tiger in him,

To sleek and supple himself to the king's hand.

*Gurth.* I trust the kingly touch that cures the evil

May serve to charm the tiger out of him.

*Leofwin.* He hath as much of cat as tiger in him.

Our Tostig loves the hand and not the man.

*Harold.* Nay! Better die than lie!

*Enter KING, QUEEN, and TOSTIG*

*Edward.* In heaven signs!

Signs upon earth! signs everywhere! your Priests

Gross, worldly, simoniacal, unlearn'd!

They scarce can read their Psalter; and your churches

Uncouth, unhandsome, while in Norman-land

God speaks thro' abler voices, as He dwells In statelier shrines. I say not this, as being Half Norman-blooded, nor as some have held,

Because I love the Norman better—no, But dreading God's revenge upon this realm

For narrowness and coldness: and I say it For the last time perchance, before I go

To find the sweet refreshment of the Saints.

I have lived a life of utter purity:

I have builded the great church of Holy Peter:

I have wrought miracles—to God the glory—

And miracles will in my name be wrought Hereafter.—I have fought the fight and go—

I see the flashing of the gates of pearl— And it is well with me, tho' some of you Have scorn'd me—ay—but after I am gone Woe, woe, to England! I have had a vision; The seven sleepers in the cave at Ephesus Have turn'd from right to left.

*Harold.* My most dear Master,

What matters? let them turn from left to right

And sleep again.



*Tostig.* Too hardy with thy king!  
A life of prayer and fasting well may see  
Deeper into the mysteries of heaven  
Than thou, good brother.

*Aldwyth (aside).* Sees he into thine,  
That thou wouldst have his promise for  
the crown?

*Edward.* Tostig says true; my son, thou  
art too hard,  
Not stagger'd by this ominous earth and  
heaven:

But heaven and earth are threads of the  
same loom,  
Play into one another, and weave the web  
That may confound thee yet.

*Harold.* Nay, I trust not,  
For I have served thee long and honestly.

*Edward.* I know it, son; I am not thank-  
less: thou  
Hast broken all my foes, lighten'd for me  
The weight of this poor crown, and left me  
time

And peace for prayer to gain a better one.  
Twelve years of service! England loves  
thee for it.

Thou art the man to rule her!

*Aldwyth (aside).* So, not Tostig!

*Harold.* And after those twelve years a  
boon, my king,

Respite, a holiday: thyself wast wont  
To love the chase: thy leave to set my feet  
On board, and hunt and hawk beyond the  
seas!

*Edward.* What with this flaming horror  
overhead?

*Harold.* Well, when it passes then.

*Edward.* Ay if it pass.  
Go not to Normandy—go not to Nor-  
mandy.

*Harold.* And wherefore not, my king, to  
Normandy?

Is not my brother Wulfnoth hostage there  
For my dead father's loyalty to thee?

I pray thee, let me hence and bring him  
home.

*Edward.* Not thee, my son: some other  
messenger.

*Harold.* And why not me, my lord, to  
Normandy?

Is not the Norman Count thy friend and  
mine?

*Edward.* I pray thee, do not go to Nor-  
mandy.

*Harold.* Because my father drove the  
Normans out  
Of England?—That was many a summer  
gone—

Forgotten and forgiven by them and thee.

*Edward.* Harold, I will not yield thee  
leave to go.

*Harold.* Why then to Flanders. I will  
hawk and hunt

In Flanders.

*Edward.* Be there not fair woods and  
fields

In England? Wilful, wilful. Go—the  
Saints

Pilot and prosper all thy wandering out  
And homeward. Tostig, I am faint again.  
Son Harold, I will in and pray for thee.

[Exit, leaning on TOSTIG, and fol-  
lowed by STIGAND, MORCAR, and  
COURTIERS.

*Harold.* What lies upon the mind of our  
good king

That he should harp this way on Nor-  
mandy?

*Queen.* Brother, the king is wiser than  
he seems;

And Tostig knows it; Tostig loves the king.

*Harold.* And love should know; and—  
be the king so wise,—

Then Tostig too were wiser than he seems.  
I love the man but not his phantasies.

(Re-enter TOSTIG)

Well, brother,  
When didst thou hear from thy Northum-  
bria?

*Tostig.* When did I hear aught but this  
'When' from thee?

Leave me alone, brother, with my North-  
umbria:

She is my mistress, let me look to her!  
The King hath made me Earl; make me  
not fool!

Nor make the King a fool, who made me  
Earl!

*Harold.* No, Tostig—lest I make myself  
a fool

Who made the King who made thee, make  
thee Earl.

- Tostig.* Why chafe me then? Thou knowest I soon go wild.
- Gurth.* Come, come! as yet thou art not gone so wild
- But thou canst hear the best and wisest of us.
- Harold.* So says old Gurth, not I: yet hear! thine earldom,
- Tostig,* hath been a kingdom. Their old crown
- Is yet a force among them, a sun set  
But leaving light enough for Alfgar's house  
To strike thee down by—nay, this ghastly glare  
May heat their fancies.
- Tostig.* My most worthy brother,  
Thou art the quietest man in all the world—
- Ay, ay and wise in peace and great in war—  
Pray God the people choose thee for their king!
- But all the powers of the house of Godwin  
Are not enframed in thee.
- Harold.* Thank the Saints, no!  
But thou hast drain'd them shallow by thy tolls,  
And thou art ever here about the King:  
Thine absence well may seem a want of care.
- Cling to their love; for, now the sons of Godwin  
Sit topmost in the field of England, envy,  
Like the rough bear beneath the tree, good brother,  
Waits till the man let go.
- Tostig.* Good counsel truly!  
I heard from my Northumbria yesterday.
- Harold.* How goes it then with thy Northumbria? Well?
- Tostig.* And wouldst thou that it went aught else than well?
- Harold.* I would it went as well as with mine earldom,  
Leofwin's and Gurth's.
- Tostig.* Ye govern milder men.
- Gurth.* We have made them milder by just government.
- Tostig.* Ay, ever give yourselves your own good word.
- Leofwin.* An honest gift, by all the Saints, if giver
- And taker be but honest! but they bribe  
Each other, and so often, an honest world  
Will not believe them.
- Harold.* I may tell thee, *Tostig,*  
I heard from thy Northumberland to-day.
- Tostig.* From spies of thine to spy my nakedness  
In my poor North!
- Harold.* There is a movement there,  
A blind one—nothing yet.
- Tostig.* Crush it at once  
With all the power I have!—I must—I will!—  
Crush it half-born! Fool still? or wisdom there,  
My wise head-shaking Harold?
- Harold.* Make not thou  
The nothing something. Wisdom when in power  
And wisest, should not frown as Power,  
but smile  
As kindness, watching all, till the true *must*  
Shall make her strike as Power: but when  
to strike—  
O *Tostig,* O dear brother—If they prance,  
Rein in, not lash them, lest they rear and run  
And break both neck and axle.
- Tostig.* Good again!  
Good counsel tho' scarce needed. Pour  
not water  
In the full vessel running out at top  
To swamp the house.
- Leofwin.* Nor thou be a wild thing  
Out of the waste, to turn and bite the hand  
Would help thee from the trap.
- Tostig.* Thou playest in tune.
- Leofwin.* To the deaf adder thee, that  
wilt not dance  
However wisely charm'd.
- Tostig.* No more, no more!
- Gurth.* I likewise cry 'no more.' Un-  
wholesome talk  
For Godwin's house! *Leofwin,* thou hast  
a tongue!
- Tostig,* thou look'st as thou wouldst spring  
upon him.
- St. Olaf,* not while I am by! Come, come,  
Join hands, let brethren dwell in unity;  
Let kith and kin stand close as our shield-  
wall,

Who breaks us then? I say, thou hast a tongue,

And Tostig is not stout enough to bear it. Vex him not, Leofwin.

*Tostig.* No, I am not vex,—  
Altho' ye seek to vex me, one and all.  
I have to make report of my good earldom  
To the good king who gave it—not to you—

Not any of you.—I am not vex at all.

*Harold.* The king? the king is ever at his prayers;

In all that handles matter of the state

I am the king.

*Tostig.* That shalt thou never be  
If I can thwart thee.

*Harold.* Brother, brother!

*Tostig.* Away!

[*Exit TOSTIG.*]

*Queen.* Spite of this grisly star ye three  
must gall

Poor Tostig.

*Leofwin.* Tostig, sister, galls himself;  
He cannot smell a rose but pricks his nose  
Against the thorn, and rails against the rose.

*Queen.* I am the only rose of all the stock  
That never thorn'd him; Edward loves him, so

Ye hate him. Harold always hated him.

Why—how they fought when boys—and,  
Holy Mary!

How Harold used to beat him!

*Harold.* Why, boys will fight.  
Leofwin would often fight me, and I beat him.

Even old Gurth would fight. I had much ado

To hold mine own against old Gurth. Old Gurth,

We fought like great states for grave cause;  
but Tostig—

On a sudden—at a something—for a nothing—

The boy would fust me hard, and when we fought

I conquer'd, and he loved me none the less,  
Till thou wouldst get him all apart, and tell him

That where he was but worsted, he was wrong'd.

Ah! thou hast taught the king to spoil him too;

Now the spoilt child sways both. Take heed, take heed;

Thou art the Queen; ye are boy and girl no more:

Side not with Tostig in any violence,  
Lest thou be sideways guilty of the violence.

*Queen.* Come fall not foul on me. I leave thee, brother.

*Harold.* Nay, my good sister—

[*Exeunt QUEEN, HAROLD, GURTH, and LEOFWIN.*]

*Aldwyth.* Gamel, son of Orm,  
What thinkest thou this means?

[*Pointing to the comet.*]

*Gamel.* War, my dear lady,  
War, waste, plague, famine, all malignities.

*Aldwyth.* It means the fall of Tostig from his earldom.

*Gamel.* That were too small a matter for a comet!

*Aldwyth.* It means the lifting of the house of Alfgar.

*Gamel.* Too small! a comet would not show for that!

*Aldwyth.* Not small for thee, if thou canst compass it.

*Gamel.* Thy love?

*Aldwyth.* As much as I can give thee, man;

This Tostig is, or like to be, a tyrant;  
Stir up thy people: oust him!

*Gamel.* And thy love?

*Aldwyth.* As much as thou canst bear.

*Gamel.* I can bear all,

And not be giddy.

*Aldwyth.* No more now: to-morrow.

## SCENE II

*In the Garden. The King's House near London. Sunset*

*Edith.* Mad for thy mate, passionate nightingale . . .

I love thee for it—ay, but stay a moment;  
He can but stay a moment: he is going.

I fain would hear him coming! . . . near me . . . near,

Somewhere—To draw him nearer with a  
charm  
Like thine to thine.

(*Singing*)

Love is come with a song and a smile,  
Welcome Love with a smile and a song:  
Love can stay but a little while.  
Why cannot he stay? They call him away:  
Ye do him wrong, ye do him wrong;  
Love will stay for a whole life long.

*Enter HAROLD*

*Harold.* The nightingales in Havering-  
in-the-Bower  
Sang out their loves so loud, that Edward's  
prayers  
Were deafen'd and he pray'd them dumb,  
and thus  
I dumb thee too, my wingless nightingale!

[*Kissing her.*]

*Edith.* Thou art my music! Would their  
wings were mine  
To follow thee to Flanders! Must thou go?  
*Harold.* Not must, but will. It is but for  
one moon.

*Edith.* Leaving so many foes in Edward's  
hall  
To league against thy weal. The Lady  
Aldwyth  
Was here to-day, and when she touch'd on  
thee,  
She stammer'd in her hate; I am sure she  
hates thee,  
Pants for thy blood.

*Harold.* Well, I have given her  
cause—  
I fear no woman.

*Edith.* Hate not one who felt  
Some pity for thy hater! I am sure  
Her morning wanted sunlight, she so  
praised  
The convent and lone life—within the  
pale—  
Beyond the passion. Nay—she held with  
Edward,  
At least methought she held with holy  
Edward,  
That marriage was half sin.

*Harold.* A lesson worth  
Finger and thumb—thus (*snaps his fingers*).  
And my answer to it—

See here—an interwoven H and E!  
Take thou this ring; I will demand his  
ward

From Edward when I come again. Ay,  
would she?

She to shut up my blossom in the dark!  
Thou art my nun, thy cloister in mine  
arms.

*Edith (taking the ring).* Yea, but Earl  
Tostig—

*Harold.* That's a truer fear!  
For if the North take fire, I should be back;  
I shall be, soon enough.

*Edith.* Ay, but last night  
An evil dream that ever came and went—  
*Harold.* A gnât that vex't thy pillow!

Had I been by,  
I would have spoil'd his horn. My girl,  
what was it?

*Edith.* Oh! that thou wert not going!  
For so methought it was our marriage-  
morn,

And while we stood together, a dead man  
Rose from behind the altar, tore away  
My marriage ring, and rent my bridal veil;  
And then I turn'd, and saw the church all  
fill'd

With dead men upright from their graves,  
and all

The dead men made at thee to murder  
thee,

But thou didst back thyself against a pillar,  
And strike among them with thy battle-  
axe—

There, what a dream!

*Harold.* Well, well—a dream  
—no more!

*Edith.* Did not Heaven speak to men in  
dreams of old?

*Harold.* Ay—well—of old. I tell thee  
what, my child;

Thou hast misread this merry dream of  
thine,

Taken the rifted pillars of the wood  
For smooth stone columns of the sanc-  
tuary,

The shadows of a hundred fat dead deer  
For dead men's ghosts. True, that the  
battle-axe

Was out of place; it should have been the  
bow.—

Come, thou shalt dream no more such  
dreams; I swear it,  
By mine own eyes—and these two sap-  
phires—these  
Twin rubies, that are amulets against all  
The kisses of all kind of womankind  
In Flanders, till the sea shall roll me back  
To tumble at thy feet.

*Edith.* That would but shame me,  
Rather than make me vain. The sea may  
roll  
Sand, shingle, shore-weed, not the living  
rock  
Which guards the land.

*Harold.* Except it be a soft one,  
And undereaten to the fall. Mine amulet . . .  
This last . . . upon thine eyelids, to shut in  
A happier dream. Sleep, sleep, and thou  
shalt see  
My grayhounds fleeting like a beam of  
light,  
And hear my peregrine and her bells in  
heaven;  
And other bells on earth, which yet are  
heaven's;

Guess what they be.

*Edith.* He cannot guess who knows.  
Farewell, my king.

*Harold.* Not yet, but then—my queen.  
[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter ALDWYTH from the thicket*

*Aldwyth.* The kiss that charms thine  
eyelids into sleep,  
Will hold mine waking. Hate him? I could  
love him  
More, tenfold, than this fearful child can  
do;  
Griffyth I hated: why not hate the foe  
Of England? Griffyth when I saw him  
flee,  
Chased deer-like up his mountains, all the  
blood  
That should have only pulsed for Griffyth,  
beat  
For his pursuer. I love him or think I love  
him.  
If he were King of England, I his queen,  
I might be sure of it. Nay, I do love him.—  
She must be cloister'd somehow, lest the  
king

Should yield his ward to Harold's will.  
What harm?

She hath but blood enough to live, not  
love.—

When Harold goes and Tostig, shall I play  
The craftier Tostig with him? fawn upon  
him?

Chime in with all? 'O thou more saint  
than king!'

And that were true enough. 'O blessed  
relics!'

'O Holy Peter!' If he found me thus,  
Harold might hate me; he is broad and  
honest,

Breathing an easy gladness . . . not like  
Aldwyth . . .

For which I strangely love him. Should  
not England

Love Aldwyth, if she stay the feuds that  
part

The sons of Godwin from the sons of  
Alfgar

By such a marrying? Courage, noble  
Aldwyth!

Let all thy people bless thee!

Our wild Tostig,  
Edward hath made him Earl: he would be  
king:—

The dog that snapt the shadow, dropt the  
bone.—

I trust he may do well, this Gamel, whom  
I play upon, that he may play the note  
Whercreat the dog shall howl and run, and  
Harold

Hear the king's music, all alone with him,  
Pronounced his heir of England.

I see the goal and half the way to it.—

Peace-lover is our Harold for the sake  
Of England's wholeness—so—to shake  
the North

With earthquake and disruption—some  
division—

Then sling mine own fair person in the gap  
A sacrifice to Harold, a peace-offering,  
A scap-goat marriage—all the sins of both  
The houses on mine head—then a fair life  
And bless the Queen of England.

*Morcar (coming from the thicket).* Art  
thou assured

By this, that Harold loves but Edith?

*Aldwyth.* Morcar!

Why creep'st thou like a timorous beast of prey  
Out of the bush by night?

*Morcar.* I follow'd thee.  
*Aldmyth.* Follow my lead, and I will make thee earl.

*Morcar.* What lead then?

*Aldmyth.* Thou shalt flash it secretly  
Among the good Northumbrian folk, that I—

That Harold loves me—yea, and presently  
That I and Harold are betroth'd—and last—

Perchance that Harold wrongs me; tho' I would not

That it should come to that.

*Morcar.* I will both flash  
And thunder for thee.

*Aldmyth.* I said 'secretly';  
It is the flash that murders, the poor thunder

Never harm'd head.

*Morcar.* But thunder may bring down  
That which the flash hath stricken.

*Aldmyth.* Down with Tostig!  
That first of all.—And when doth Harold go?

*Morcar.* To-morrow—first to Bosham,  
then to Flanders.

*Aldmyth.* Not to come back till Tostig  
shall have shown

And redden'd with his people's blood the teeth

That shall be broken by us—yea, and thou  
Chair'd in his place. Good-night, and dream thyself

Their chosen Earl. *[Exit ALDWYTH.]*

*Morcar.* Earl first, and after that  
Who knows I may not dream myself their king!

## ACT II

## SCENE I

*Seashore. Ponthieu. Night*

*HAROLD and his MEN, wrecked*

*Harold.* Friends, in that last inhospitable  
plunge

Our boat hath burst her ribs; but ours are  
whole;

I have but bark'd my hands.

*Attendant.*

I dug mine into  
My old fast friend the shore, and clinging  
thus

Felt the remorseless outdraught of the  
deep

Haul like a great strong fellow at my legs,  
And then I rose and ran. The blast that  
came

So suddenly hath fallen as suddenly—  
Put thou the comet and this blast to-  
gether—

*Harold.* Put thou thyself and mother-  
wit together.

Be not a fool!

*(Enter FISHERMEN with torches, HAROLD  
going up to one of them, ROLF)*

Wicked sea-will-o'-the-wisp!  
Wolf of the shore! dog, with thy lying  
lights

Thou hast betray'd us on these rocks of  
thine!

*Rolf.* Ay, but thou liest as loud as the  
black herring-pond behind thee. We be  
fishermen; I came to see after my nets.

*Harold.* To drag us into them. Fisher-  
men? devils!

Who, while ye fish for men with your false  
fires,

Let the great Devil fish for your own souls.

*Rolf.* Nay then, we be liker the blessed  
Apostles; they were fishers of men, Father  
Jean says.

*Harold.* I had liefer that the fish had  
swallowed me,

Like Jonah, than have known there were  
such devils.

What's to be done?

*[To his MEN—goes apart with them.]*

*Fisherman.* Rolf, what fish did swallow  
Jonah?

*Rolf.* A whale!

*Fisherman.* Then a whale to a whelk we  
have swallowed the King of England I  
saw him over there. Look thee, Rolf, when  
I was down in the fever, she was down with  
the hunger, and thou didst stand by her  
and give her thy crabs, and set her up  
again, till now, by the patient Saints, she's  
as crabbed as ever.

*Rolf.* And I'll give her my crabs again, when thou art down again.

*Fisherman.* I thank thee, Rolf. Run thou to Count Guy; he is hard at hand. Tell him what hath crept into our creel, and he will fee thee as freely as he will wrench this outlander's ransom out of him—and why not? for what right had he to get himself wrecked on another man's land?

*Rolf.* Thou art the human-heartedest, Christian-chariticiest of all crab-catchers. Share and share alike! *[Exit.]*

*Harold (to FISHERMAN).* Fellow, dost thou catch crabs?

*Fisherman.* As few as I may in a wind, and less than I would in a calm. Ay!

*Harold.* I have a mind that thou shalt catch no more.

*Fisherman.* How?

*Harold.* I have a mind to brain thee with mine axe.

*Fisherman.* Ay, do, do, and our great Count-crab will make his nippers meet in thine heart; he'll sweat it out of thee, he'll sweat it out of thee. Look, he's here! He'll speak for himself! Hold thine own, if thou canst!

*Enter GUY, COUNT OF PONTIEU*

*Harold.* Guy, Count of Ponthieu?

*Guy.* Harold, Earl of Wessex!

*Harold.* Thy villains with their lying lights have wreck'd us!

*Guy.* Art thou not Earl of Wessex?

*Harold.* In mine earldom  
A man may hang gold bracelets on a bush,  
And leave them for a year, and coming  
back  
Find them again.

*Guy.* Thou art a mighty man  
In thine own earldom!

*Harold.* Were such murderous liars  
In Wessex—if I caught them, they should  
hang  
Cliff-gibbeted for sea-marks; our sea-mew  
Winging their only wail!

*Guy.* Ay, but my men  
Hold that the shipwreckt are accursed of  
God;—

What hinders me to hold with mine own  
men?

*Harold.* The Christian manhood of the  
man who reigns!

*Guy.* Ay, rave thy worst, but in our  
oublettes

Thou shalt or rot or ransom. Hale him  
hence! *[To one of his ATTENDANTS,*  
Fly thou to William; tell him we have  
Harold.

## SCENE II

### Bayeux. Palace

COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM MALET

*William.* We hold our Saxon woodcock  
in the springe,  
But he begins to flutter. As I think  
He was thine host in England when I went  
To visit Edward.

*Malet.* Yea, and there, my lord,  
To make allowance for their rougher  
fashions,

I found him all a noble host should be.

*William.* Thou art his friend: thou  
know'st my claim on England  
Thro' Edward's promise: we have him in  
the toils.

And it were well, if thou shouldst let him  
feel,

How dense a fold of danger nets him  
round,

So that he bristle himself against my will.

*Malet.* What would I do, my lord, if I  
were you?

*William.* What wouldst thou do?

*Malet.* My lord, he is thy guest.

*William.* Nay, by the splendour of God,  
no guest of mine.

He came not to see me, had past me by  
To hunt and hawk elsewhere, save for the  
fate

Which hunted him when that un-Saxon  
blast,

And bolts of thunder moulded in high  
heaven

To serve the Norman purpose, drave and  
crack'd

His boat on Ponthieu beach; where our  
friend Guy

Had wrung his ransom from him by the  
rack,

But that I stept between and purchased  
him,  
Translating his captivity from Guy  
To mine own hearth at Bayeux, where he  
sits  
My ransom'd prisoner.

*Malet.* Well, if not with gold,  
With golden deeds and iron strokes that  
brought

Thy war with Brittany to a goodlier close  
Than else had been, he paid his ransom  
back.

*William.* So that henceforth they are not  
like to league  
With Harold against me.

*Malet.* A marvel, how  
He from the liquid sands of Coesnon  
Haled thy shore—swallow'd, armour'd Nor-  
mans up

To fight for thee again!

*William.* Perchance against  
Their savor, save thou save him from him-  
self.

*Malet.* But I should let him home again,  
my lord.

*William.* Simple! let fly the bird within  
To catch the bird again within the bush!  
No.

Smooth thou my way, before he clash  
with me;

I want his voice in England for the crown,  
I want thy voice with him to bring him  
round;

And being brave he must be subtly cow'd,  
And being truthful wrought upon to swear  
Vows that he dare not break. England our  
own

Thro' Harold's help, he shall be my dear  
friend

As well as thine, and thou thyself shalt have  
Large lordship there of lands and territory.

*Malet.* I knew thy purpose; he and  
Wulfnoth never

Have met, except in public; shall they  
meet

In private? I have often talk'd with  
Wulfnoth,

And stuff'd the boy with fears that these  
may act

On Harold when they meet.

*William.* Then let them meet!  
*Malet.* I can but love this noble, honest  
Harold.

*William.* Love him! why not? thine is a  
loving office,  
I have commission'd thee to save the man:  
Help the good ship, showing the sunken  
rock,

Or he is wreckt for ever.

*Enter WILLIAM RUFUS*

*William Rufus.* Father.

*William.* Well, boy.

*William Rufus.* They have taken away  
the toy thou gavest me,

The Norman knight.

*William.* Why, boy?

*William Rufus.* Because I broke  
The horse's leg—it was mine own to  
break;

I like to have my toys, and break them too.

*William.* Well, thou shalt have another  
Norman knight!

*William Rufus.* And may I break his  
legs?

*William.* Yea,—get thee gone!

*William Rufus.* I'll tell them I have had  
my way with thee. [*Exit.*]

*Malet.* I never knew thee check thy will  
for ought

Save for the prattling of thy little ones.

*William.* Who shall be kings of England.

I am heir

Of England by the promise of her king.

*Malet.* But there the great Assembly  
choose their king,

The choice of England is the voice of  
England.

*William.* I will be king of England by the  
laws,

The choice, and voice of England.

*Malet.* Can that be?

*William.* The voice of any people is the  
sword

That guards them, or the sword that beats  
them down.

Here comes the would-be what I will be  
. . . kinglike . . .

Tho' scarce at ease; for, save our meshes  
break,

More kinglike he than like to prove a king.



(Enter HAROLD, musing, with his eyes on the ground)

He sees me not—and yet he dreams of me.  
Earl, wilt thou fly my falcons this fair day?  
They are of the best, strong-wing'd against  
the wind.

*Harold (looking up suddenly, having caught but the last word).* Which way  
does it blow?

*William.* Blowing for England, ha?

Not yet. Thou hast not learnt thy quarters  
here.

The winds so cross and jostle among these  
towers.

*Harold.* Count of the Normans, thou  
hast ransom'd us,  
Maintain'd, and entertain'd us royally!

*William.* And thou for us hast fought as  
loyally,

Which binds us friendship-fast for ever!

*Harold.* Good!

But lest we turn the scale of courtesy  
By too much pressure on it, I would fain,  
Since thou hast promised Wulfnoth home  
with us,

Be home again with Wulfnoth.

*William.* Stay—as yet  
Thou hast but seen how Norman hands  
can strike,

But walk'd our Norman field, scarce  
touch'd or tasted

The splendours of our Court.

*Harold.* I am in no mood:  
I should be as the shadow of a cloud  
Crossing your light.

*William.* Nay, rest a week or two,  
And we will fill thee full of Norman sun,  
And send thee back among thine island mists  
With laughter.

*Harold.* Count, I thank thee, but  
had rather  
Breathe the free wind from off our Saxon  
downs,  
Tho' charged with all the wet of all the  
west.

*William.* Why if thou wilt, so let it be—  
thou shalt.

That were a graceless hospitality  
To chain the free guest to the banquet-  
board;

To-morrow we will ride with thee to  
Harfleur,

And see thee shipt, and pray in thy behalf  
For happier homeward winds than that  
which crack'd

Thy bark at Ponthieu,—yet to us, in faith,  
A happy one—whereby we came to know  
Thy valour and thy value, noble earl.

Ay, and perchance a happy one for thee,  
Provided—I will go with thee to-morrow—  
Nay—but there be conditions, easy ones,  
So thou, fair friend, will take them easily.

*Enter PAGE*

*Page.* My lord, there is a post from over  
seas

With news for thee. [*Exit PAGE.*]

*William.* Come, Malet, let us hear!  
[*Execute COUNT WILLIAM and MALET.*]

*Harold.* Conditions? What conditions?  
pay him back

His ransom? 'easy'—that were easy—  
nay—

No money-lover he! What said the King?  
'I pray you do not go to Normandy.'

And fate hath blown me hither, bound  
me too

With bitter obligation to the Count—  
Have I not fought it out? What did he  
mean?

There lodged a gleaming grimness in his  
eyes,

Gave his shorn smile the lie. The walls  
oppress me,

And yon huge keep that hinders half the  
heaven.

Free air! free field!

[*Moves to go out. A MAN-AT-ARMS  
follows him.*]

*Harold (to the MAN-AT-ARMS).* I need  
thee not. Why dost thou follow me?

*Man-at-arms.* I have the count's com-  
mands to follow thee.

*Harold.* What then? Am I in danger in  
this court?

*Man-at-arms.* I cannot tell. I have the  
Count's commands.

*Harold.* Stand out of earshot then, and  
keep me still

In eyeshot.

*Man-at-arms.* Yea, lord Harold.

[*Withdraws.*]

*Harold.* And arm'd men  
Ever keep watch beside my chamber door,  
And if I walk within the lonely wood,  
There is an arm'd man ever glides behind!

(*Enter MALET*)

Why am I follow'd, haunted, harass'd,  
watch'd?  
See yonder!

[*Pointing to the MAN-AT-ARMS.*]

*Malet.* 'Tis the good Count's care  
for thee!

The Normans love thee not, nor thou the  
Normans,  
O!—so they deem.

*Harold.* But wherefore is the wind,  
Which way soever the vane-arrow swing,  
Not ever fair for England? Why but now  
He said (thou heardest him) that I must not  
hence  
Save on conditions.

*Malet.* So in truth he said.

*Harold.* Malet, thy mother was an Eng-  
lishwoman;  
There somewhere beats an English pulse  
in thee!

*Malet.* Well—for my mother's sake I  
love your England,  
But for my father I love Normandy.

*Harold.* Speak for thy mother's sake,  
and tell me true.

*Malet.* Then for my mother's sake and  
England's sake  
That suffers in the daily want of thee,  
Obey the Count's conditions, my good  
friend.

*Harold.* How, Malet, if they be not  
honourable!

*Malet.* Seem to obey them.

*Harold.* Better die than lie!

*Malet.* Choose therefore whether thou  
wilt have thy conscience  
White as a maiden's hand, or whether  
England  
Be shatter'd into fragments.

*Harold.* News from England?

*Malet.* Morcar and Edwin have stirr'd  
up the Thanes

Against thy brother Tostig's governance;  
And all the North of Humber is one storm.

*Harold.* I should be there, Malet, I  
should be there!

*Malet.* And Tostig in his own hall on  
suspicion

Hath massacred the Thane that was his  
guest,

Gamel, the son of Orm: and there be more  
As villainously slain.

*Harold.* The wolf! the beast!  
Ill news for guests, ha, Malet! More?

What more?

What do they say? did Edward know of this?

*Malet.* They say, his wife was knowing  
and abetting.

*Harold.* They say, his wife!—To marry  
and have no husband

Makes the wife fool. My God, I should be  
there.

I'll hack my way to the sea.

*Malet.* Thou canst not, Harold;  
Our Duke is all between thee and the sea,  
Our Duke is all about thee like a God;  
All passes block'd. Obey him, speak him  
fair,

For he is only debonair to those  
That follow where he leads, but stark as  
death

To those that cross him.—Look thou, here  
is Wulfnoth!

I leave thee to thy talk with him alone;  
How wan, poor lad! how sick and sad for  
home!

[*Exit MALET.*]

*Harold (muttering).* Go not to Normandy  
—go not to Normandy!

(*Enter WULFNOTH*)

Poor brother! still a hostage!

*Wulfnoth.* Yea, and I  
Shall see the dewy kiss of dawn no more  
Make blush the maiden-white of our tall  
cliffs,

Nor mark the sea-bird rouse himself and  
hover

Above the windy ripple, and fill the sky  
With free sea-laughter—never—save in-  
deed

Thou canst make yield this iron-mooded  
Duke

To let me go.

*Harold.* Why, brother, so he will;  
But on conditions. Canst thou guess at them?

*Wulfnoth.* Draw nearer,—I was in the corridor,  
I saw him coming with his brother Odo  
The Bayeux bishop, and I hid myself.

*Harold.* They did thee wrong who made thee hostage; thou  
Wast ever fearful.

*Wulfnoth.* And he spoke—I heard him—  
‘This Harold is not of the royal blood,  
Can have no right to the crown,’ and Odo said,  
‘Thine is the right, for thine the might; he is here,  
And yonder is thy keep.’

*Harold.* No, Wulfnoth, no.  
*Wulfnoth.* And William laugh’d and swore that might was right,  
Far as he knew in this poor world of ours—  
‘Marry, the Saints must go along with us,  
And, brother, we will find a way,’ said he—  
Yea, yea, he would be king of England.

*Harold.* Never!  
*Wulfnoth.* Yea, but thou must not this way answer him.

*Harold.* Is it not better still to speak the truth?

*Wulfnoth.* Not here, or thou wilt never hence nor I:

For in the racing toward this golden goal  
He turns not right or left, but tramples flat  
Whatever thwarts him; hast thou never heard

His savagery at Alençon,—the town  
Hung out raw hides along their walls, and cried

‘Work for the tanner.’

*Harold.* That had anger’d me  
Had I been William.

*Wulfnoth.* Nay, but he had prisoners,  
He tore their eyes out, sliced their hands  
away,  
And flung them streaming o’er the battle-  
ments

Upon the heads of those who walk’d  
within—

O speak him fair, Harold, for thine own  
sake.

*Harold.* Your Welshman says, ‘The  
Truth against the World,’  
Much more the truth against myself.

*Wulfnoth.* Thyself?  
But for my sake, oh brother! oh! for my  
sake!

*Harold.* Poor Wulfnoth! do they not  
entreat thee well?

*Wulfnoth.* I see the blackness of my  
dungeon loom

Across their lamps of revel, and beyond  
The merriest murmurs of their banquet  
clank

The shackles that will bind me to the wall.  
*Harold.* Too fearful still!

*Wulfnoth.* Oh no, no—speak  
him fair!

Call it to temporize; and not to lie;

*Harold.* I do not counsel thee to lie.

The man that hath to foil a murderous aim  
May, surely, play with words.

*Harold.* Words are the man.  
Not ev’n for thy sake, brother, would I lie.

*Wulfnoth.* Then for thine Edith?

*Harold.* There thou prick’st me  
deep.

*Wulfnoth.* And for our Mother England?

*Harold.* Deeper still.

*Wulfnoth.* And deeper still the deep-  
down oubliette,

Down thirty feet below the smiling day—  
In blackness—dogs’ food thrown upon thy  
head.

And over thee the suns arise and set,  
And the lark sings, the sweet stars come  
and go,

And men are at their markets, in their  
fields,

And woo their loves and have forgotten  
thee;

And thou art upright in thy living grave,  
Where there is barely room to shift thy  
side,

And all thine England hath forgotten thee;  
And he our lazy-pious Norman King,  
With all his Normans round him once again,  
Counts his old beads, and hath forgotten  
thee.

*Harold.* Thou art of my blood, and so  
methinks, my boy,  
Thy fears infect me beyond reason. Peace!

*Wulfnoth.* And then our fiery Tostig,  
while thy hands  
Are palsied here, if his Northumbrians  
rise  
And hurl him from them,—I have heard  
the Normans  
Count upon this confusion—may he not  
make  
A league with William, so to bring him  
back?

*Harold.* That lies within the shadow of  
the chance.

*Wulfnoth.* And like a river in flood thro'  
a burst dam  
Descends the ruthless Norman—our good  
King  
Kneels mumbling some old bone—our  
helpless folk  
Are wash'd away, wailing, in their own  
blood—

*Harold.* Wailing! not warring? Boy,  
thou hast forgotten  
That thou art English.

*Wulfnoth.* Then our modest women—  
I know the Norman license—thine own  
Edith—

*Harold.* No more! I will not hear thee—  
William comes.

*Wulfnoth.* I dare not well be seen in talk  
with thee.  
Make thou not mention that I spake with  
thee.

[*Moves away to the back of the stage.*]

*Enter WILLIAM, MALET, and OFFICER*

*Officer.* We have the man that rail'd  
against thy birth.

*William.* Tear out his tongue.

*Officer.* He shall not rail again.  
He said that he should see confusion fall  
On thee and on thine house.

*William.* Tear out his eyes,  
And plunge him into prison.

*Officer.* It shall be done.  
[*Exit OFFICER.*]

*William.* Look not amazed, fair earl!  
Better leave undone  
Than do by halves—tongueless and eye-  
less, prison'd—

*Harold.* Better methinks have slain the  
man at once!

*William.* We have respect for man's  
immortal soul,  
We seldom take man's life, except in war;  
It frights the traitor more to maim and  
blind.

*Harold.* In mine own land I should have  
scorn'd the man,  
Or lash'd his rascal back, and let him go.  
*William.* And let him go? To slander  
thee again!

Yet in thine own land in thy father's day  
They blinded my young kinsman, Alfred  
—ay,  
Some said it was thy father's deed.

*Harold.* They lied.  
*William.* But thou and he—whom at thy  
word, for thou

Art known a speaker of the truth, I free  
From this foul charge—

*Harold.* Nay, nay, he freed himself  
By oath and compurgation from the charge.  
The king, the lords, the people clear'd him  
of it.

*William.* But thou and he drove our  
good Normans out  
From England, and this rankles in us yet.  
Archbishop Robert hardly scaped with life.

*Harold.* Archbishop Robert! Robert the  
Archbishop!  
Robert of Jumièges, he that—

*Malet.* Quiet! quiet!  
*Harold.* Count! if there sat within the  
Norman chair

A ruler all for England—one who fill'd  
All offices, all bishopricks with English—  
We could not move from Dover to the  
Humber

Saving thro' Norman bishopricks—I say  
Ye would applaud that Norman who  
should drive

The stranger to the fiends!

*William.* Why, that is reason!  
Warrior thou art, and mighty wise withal!  
Ay, ay, but many among our Norman lords  
Hate thee for this, and press upon me—  
saying

God and the sea have given thee to our  
hands—  
To plunge thee into life-long prison  
here:—

Yet I hold out against them, as I may,

**Yea**—would hold out, yea, tho' they should revolt—

For thou hast done the battle in my cause;  
I am thy fastest friend in Normandy.

*Harold.* I am doubly bound to thee . . .  
if this be so.

*William.* And I would bind thee more,  
and would myself

Be bounden to thee more.

*Harold.* Then let me hence  
With Wulfnoth to King Edward.

*William.* So we will.  
We hear he hath not long to live.

*Harold.* It may be.

*William.* Why then the heir of England,  
who is he?

*Harold.* The Atheling is nearest to the throne.

*William.* But sickly, slight, half-witted  
and a child,

Will England have him king?

*Harold.* It may be, no.

*William.* And hath King Edward not  
pronounced his heir?

*Harold.* Not that I know.

*William.* When he was here in  
Normandy,

He loved us and we him, because we found  
him

A Norman of the Normans.

*Harold.* So did we.

*William.* A gentle, gracious, pure and  
saintly man!

And grateful to the hand that shielded  
him,

He promised that if ever he were king

In England, he would give his kingly voice  
To me as his successor. Knowest thou  
this?

*Harold.* I learn it now.

*William.* Thou knowest I am his  
cousin,

And that my wife descends from Alfred?

*Harold.* Ay.

*William.* Who hath a better claim then  
to the crown

So that ye will not crown the Atheling?

*Harold.* None that I know . . . if that but  
hung upon

King Edward's will.

*William.* Wilt thou uphold my claim?

*Malet (aside to HAROLD).* Be careful of  
thine answer, my good friend.

*Wulfnoth (aside to HAROLD).* Oh! Harold,  
for my sake and for thine own!

*Harold.* Ay . . . if the king have not  
revoked his promise.

*William.* But hath he done it then?

*Harold.* Not that I know.

*William.* Good, good, and thou wilt help  
me to the crown?

*Harold.* Ay . . . if the Witan will consent  
to this.

*William.* Thou art the mightiest voice in  
England, man,

Thy voice will lead the Witan—shall I  
have it?

*Wulfnoth (aside to HAROLD).* Oh! Harold,  
if thou love thine Edith, ay.

*Harold.* Ay, if—

*Malet (aside to HAROLD).* Thine 'ifs' will  
sear thine eyes out—ay.

*William.* I ask thee, wilt thou help me  
to the crown?

And I will make thee my great Earl of  
Earls,

Foremost in England and in Normandy;  
Thou shalt be verily king—all but the

name—

For I shall most sojourn in Normandy;

And thou be my vice-king in England.  
Speak.

*Wulfnoth (aside to HAROLD).* Ay, brother  
—for the sake of England—ay.

*Harold.* My lord—

*Malet (aside to HAROLD).* Take heed now

*Harold.* Ay.

*William.* I am content,

For thou art truthful, and thy word thy  
bond.

To-morrow will we ride with thee to  
Harfleur. [Exit WILLIAM.

*Malet.* Harold, I am thy friend, one life  
with thee,

And even as I should bless thee saving  
mine,

I thank thee now for having saved thyself.  
[Exit MALET.

*Harold.* For having lost myself to save  
myself,

Said 'ay' when I meant 'no,' lied like  
a lad

That dreads the pendent scourge, said 'ay'  
for 'no'!

Ay! No!—he hath not bound me by an  
oath—

Is 'ay' an oath? is 'ay' strong as an oath?  
Or is it the same sin to break my word  
As break mine oath? He call'd my word  
my bond!

He is a liar who knows I am a liar,  
And makes believe that he believes my  
word—

The crime be on his head—not bounden  
—no.

*[Suddenly doors are flung open, discovering in an inner hall COUNT WILLIAM in his state robes, seated upon his throne, between two Bishops, ODO OF BAYEUX being one: in the centre of the hall an ark covered with cloth of gold; and on either side of it the Norman barons.]*

*Enter a JAILOR before WILLIAM's throne.*

William (to JAILOR). Knave, hast thou  
let thy prisoner scape?

Jailor. Sir Count,  
He had but one foot, he must have hopt  
away,  
Yea, some familiar spirit must have help'd  
him.

William. Woe knave to thy familiar and  
to thee!

Give me thy keys. *[They fall clashing.]*  
Nay let them lie. Stand there and wait my  
will. *[The JAILOR stands aside.]*

William (to HAROLD). Hast thou such  
trustless jailors in thy North?

Harold. We have few prisoners in mine  
earldom there,

So less chance for false keepers.

William. We have heard  
Of thy just, mild, and equal governance;  
Honour to thee! thou art perfect in all  
honour!

Thy naked word thy bond! confirm it now  
Before our gather'd Norman baronage,  
For they will not believe thee—as I believe.

*[Descends from his throne and stands by the ark.]*

Let all men here bear witness of our bond!  
*[Beckons to HAROLD, who advances.]*

*Enter MALET behind him.*

Lay thou thy hand upon this golden pall!  
Behold the jewel of St. Pancratius

Woven into the gold. Swear thou on this!

Harold. What should I swear? Why  
should I swear on this?

William (savagely). Swear thou to help  
me to the crown of England.

Malet (whispering HAROLD). My friend,  
thou hast gone too far to palter now.

Wulfnoth (whispering HAROLD). Swear  
thou to-day, to-morrow is thine own.

Harold. I swear to help thee to the  
crown of England . . .

According as King Edward promises.

William. Thou must swear absolutely,  
noble Earl.

Malet (whispering). Delay is death to  
thee, ruin to England.

Wulfnoth (whispering). Swear, dearest  
brother, I beseech thee, swear!

Harold (putting his hand on the jewel).  
I swear to help thee to the crown of  
England.

William. Thanks, truthful Earl! I did  
not doubt thy word,  
But that my barons might believe thy  
word,

And that the Holy Saints of Normandy  
When thou art home in England, with  
thine own,

Might strengthen thee in keeping of thy  
word,

I made thee swear.—Show him by whom  
he hath sworn.

*[The two Bishops advance, and raise the cloth of gold. The bodies and bones of Saints are seen lying in the ark.]*

The holy bones of all the Canonised  
From all the holiest shrines in Normandy!

Harold. Horrible! *[They let the cloth fall again.]*

William. Ay, for thou hast sworn an  
oath

Which, if not kept, would make the hard  
earth rive

To the very Devil's horns, the bright sky  
cleave

To the very feet of God, and send her  
hosts

Of injured Saints to scatter sparks of plague  
Thro' all your cities, blast your infants, dash  
The torch of war among your standing corn,  
Dabble your hearts with your own blood.  
—Enough!  
Thou wilt not break it! I, the Count—the King—

Thy friend—am grateful for thine honest oath,

Not coming fiercely like a conqueror, now,  
But softly as a bridegroom to his own.  
For I shall rule according to your laws,  
And make your ever-jarring Earldoms move

To music and in order—Angle, Jute,  
Dane, Saxon, Norman, help to build a throne

Out-towering hers of France . . . The wind is fair

For England now . . . To-night we will be merry.

To-morrow will I ride with thee to Harfleur.

[*Exeunt WILLIAM and all the Norman barons, etc.*]

Harold. To-night we will be merry—and to-morrow—

Juggler and bastard—bastard—he hates that most—

William the tanner's bastard! Would he heard me!

O God, that I were in some wide, waste field

With nothing but my battle-axe and him  
To spatter his brains! Why let earth rive, gulf in

These cursed Normans—yea and mine own self.

Cleave heaven, and send thy saints that I may say

Ev'n to their faces, 'If ye side with William  
Ye are not noble.' How their pointed fingers

Glared at me! Am I Harold, Harold, son  
Of our great Godwin? Lo! I touch mine arms,

My limbs—they are not mine—they are a liar's—

I mean to be a liar—I am not bound—

Stigand shall give me absolution for it—  
Did the chest move? did it move? I am utter craven!

O Wulfnoth, Wulfnoth, brother, thou hast betray'd me!

Wulfnoth. Forgive me, brother, I will live here and die.

*Enter PAGE*

Page. My lord! the Duke awaits thee at the banquet.

Harold. Where they eat dead men's flesh, and drink their blood.

Page. My lord—

Harold. I know your Norman cookery is so spiced,

It masks all this.

Page. My lord! thou art white as death.

Harold. With looking on the dead. Am I so white?

Thy Duke will seem the darker. Hence, I follow. [*Exeunt.*]

## ACT III

### SCENE I

#### *The King's Palace. London*

KING EDWARD *dying on a couch, and by him standing the QUEEN, HAROLD, ARCHBISHOP STIGAND, GURTH, LEOFWIN, ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, ALDWYTH, and EDITH.*

Stigand. Sleeping or dying there? If this be death,

Then our great Council wait to crown thee King—

Come hither, I have a power;

[*To HAROLD.*]

They call me near, for I am close to thee  
And England—I, old shrivell'd Stigand, I,  
Dry as an old wood-fungus on a dead tree,  
I have a power!

See here this little key about my neck!  
There lies a treasure buried down in Ely:  
If e'er the Norman grow too hard for thee,  
Ask me for this at thy most need, son

Harold,

At thy most need—not sooner.

Harold.

So I will.

*Stigand.* Red gold—a hundred purses—  
yea, and more!  
If thou canst make a wholesome use of  
these

To chink against the Norman, I do believe  
My old crook'd spine would bud out two  
young wings  
To fly to heaven straight with.

*Harold.* Thank thee, father  
Thou art English, Edward too is English  
now,  
He hath clean repented of his Normanism.

*Stigand.* Ay, as the libertine repents who  
cannot

Make done undone, when thro' his dying  
sense

Shrills 'lost thro' thee.' They have built  
their castles here;

Our priories are Norman; the Norman  
adder

Hath bitten us; we are poison'd: our dear  
England

Is demi-Norman. He!—

[*Pointing to KING EDWARD, sleeping.*]

*Harold.* I would I were  
As holy and as passionless as he!  
That I might rest as calmly! Look at him—  
The rosy face, and long down-silvering  
beard,

The brows unwrinkled as a summer  
mere.—

*Stigand.* A summer mere with sudden  
wreckful gusts

From a side-gorge. Passionless? How he  
flamed

When Tostig's anger'd earldom flung  
him, nay,

He fain had calcined all Northumbria  
To one black ash, but that thy patriot  
passion

Siding with our great Council against  
Tostig,

Out-passion'd his! Holy? ay, ay, forsooth,  
A conscience for his own soul, not his  
realm;

A twilight conscience lighted thro' a chink;  
Thine by the sun; nay, by some sun to be,  
When all the world hath learnt to speak  
the truth,

And lying were self-murder by that state  
Which was the exception.

*Harold.* That sun may God speed!  
*Stigand.* Come, Harold, shake the cloud  
off!

*Harold.* Can I, father?

Our Tostig parted cursing me and Eng-  
land;

Our sister hates us for his banishment;  
He hath gone to kindle Norway against  
England,

And Wulfnoth is alone in Normandy.  
For when I rode with William down to  
Harfleur,

'Wulfnoth is sick,' he said; 'he cannot  
follow;'

Then with that friendly-fiendly smile of his  
'We have learnt to love him, let him a little  
longer

Remain a hostage for the loyalty  
Of Godwin's house.' As far as touches  
Wulfnoth

I that so prized plain word and naked truth  
Have sinn'd against it—all in vain.

*Leofwin.* Good brother,  
By all the truths that ever priest hath  
preach'd,

Of all the lies that ever men have lied,  
Thine is the pardonablest.

*Harold.* May be so!  
I think it so, I think I am a fool

To think it can be otherwise than so.

*Stigand.* Tut, tut, I have absolved thee:  
dost thou scorn me,

Because I had my Canterbury pallium,  
From one whom they disposed?

*Harold.* No, Stigand, no!  
*Stigand.* Is naked truth actable in true  
life?

I have heard a saying of thy father Godwin,  
That, were a man of state nakedly true,  
Men would but take him for the craftier  
liar.

*Leofwin.* Be men less delicate than the  
Devil himself?

I thought that naked Truth would shame  
the Devil

The Devil is so modest.

*Gurth.* He never said it!

*Leofwin.* Be thou not stupid-honest,  
brother Gurth!

*Harold.* Better to be a liar's dog, and  
hold



My master honest, than believe that lying  
And ruling men are fatal twins that cannot  
Move one without the other. Edward  
wakes!—

Dazed—he hath seen a vision.

*Edward.* The green tree!  
Then a great Angel past along the highest  
Crying ‘the doom of England,’ and at once  
He stood beside me, in his grasp a sword  
Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft the tree  
From off the bearing trunk, and hurl’d it  
from him

Three fields away, and then he dash’d and  
drench’d,

He dyed, he soak’d the trunk with human  
blood,

And brought the sunder’d tree again, and  
set it

Straight on the trunk, that thus baptized  
in blood

Grew ever high and higher, beyond my  
seeing,

And shot out sidelong boughs across the  
deep

That dropt themselves, and rooted in far  
isles

Beyond my seeing: and the great Angel  
rose

And past again along the highest crying  
‘The doom of England!’—Tostig, raise  
my head! [*Falls back senseless.*]

*Harold (raising him).* Let Harold serve  
for Tostig!

*Queen.* Harold served

Tostig so ill, he cannot serve for Tostig!  
Ay, raise his head, for thou hast laid it low!  
The sickness of our saintly king, for whom  
My prayers go up as fast as my tears fall,  
I well believe, hath mainly drawn itself  
From lack of Tostig—thou hast banish’d  
him.

*Harold.* Nay—but the council, and the  
king himself,

*Queen.* Thou hatest him, hatest him.

*Harold (coldly).* Ay—Stigand,  
unriddle

This vision, canst thou?

*Stigand.* Dotage!

*Edward (starting up).* It is finish’d.

I have built the Lord a house—the Lord  
hath dwelt

In darkness. I have built the Lord a  
house—

Palms, flowers, pomegranates, golden  
cherubim

With twenty-cubit wings from wall to  
wall—

I have built the Lord a house—sing,  
Asaph! clash

The cymbal, Heman! blow the trumpet,  
priest!

Fall, cloud, and fill the house—lo! my two  
pillars,

Jachin and Boaz!—

[*Seeing HAROLD and GURTH*]

Harold, Gurth,—where am I?

Where is the charter of our Westminster?  
*Stigand.* It lies beside thee, king, upon  
thy bed.

*Edward.* Sign, sign at once—take, sign  
it, Stigand, Aldred!

Sign it, my good son Harold, Gurth, and  
Leofwin,

Sign it, my queen!

*All.*

We have sign’d it.

*Edward.*

It is finish’d!

The kingliest Abbey in all Christian lands,  
The lordliest, loftiest minster ever built  
To Holy Peter in our English isle!

Let me be buried there, and all our kings,  
And all our just and wise and holy men

That shall be born hereafter. It is finish’d!  
Hast thou had absolution for thine oath?

[*To HAROLD.*]

*Harold.* Stigand hath given me absolu-  
tion for it.

*Edward.* Stigand is not canonical enough  
To save thee from the wrath of Norman  
Saints.

*Stigand.* Norman enough! Be there no  
Saints of England

To help us from their brethren yonder?

*Edward.*

Prelate,

The Saints are one, but those of Norman-  
land

Are mightier than our own. Ask it of  
Aldred.

[*To HAROLD.*]

*Aldred.* It shall be granted him, my  
king; for he

Who vows a vow to strangle his own  
mother

Is guiltier keeping this, than breaking it.

*Edward.* O friends, I shall not overlive the day.

*Stigand.* Why then the throne is empty. Who inherits?

For tho' we be not bound by the king's voice

In making of a king, yet the king's voice Is much toward his making. Who inherits? Edgar the Atheling?

*Edward.* No, no, but Harold. I love him: he hath served me: none but he Can rule all England. Yet the curse is on him

For swearing falsely by those blessed bones;

He did not mean to keep his vow.

*Harold.* Not mean To make our England Norman.

*Edward.* There spake Godwin, Who hated all the Normans; but their Saints Have heard thee, Harold.

*Edith.* Oh! my lord, my king! He knew not whom he sware by.

*Edward.* Yea, I know He knew not, but those heavenly ears have heard,

Their curse is on him; wilt thou bring another,

Edith, upon his head?

*Edith.* No, no, not I.

*Edward.* Why then, thou must not wed him.

*Harold.* Wherefore, wherefore?

*Edward.* O son, when thou didst tell me of thine oath, I sorrow'd for my random promise given To yon fox-lion. I did not dream then I should be king.—My son, the Saints are virgins;

They love the white rose of virginity, The cold, white lily blowing in her cell: I have been myself a virgin; and I sware To consecrate my virgin here to heaven— The silent, cloister'd, solitary life, A life of life-long prayer against the curse That lies on thee and England.

*Harold.* No, no, no.

*Edward.* Treble denial of the tongue of flesh, Like Peter's when he fell, and thou wilt have To wail for it like Peter. O my son!

Are all oaths to be broken then, all promises Made in our agony for help from heaven? Son, there is one who loves thee: and a wife,

What matters who, so she be serviceable In all obedience, as mine own hath been: God bless thee, wedded daughter.

[*Laying his hand on the QUEEN'S head.*

*Queen.* Bless thou too That brother whom I love beyond the rest, My banish'd Tostig.

*Edward.* All the sweet Saints bless him!

Spare and forbear him, Harold, if he comes! And let him pass unscathed; he loves me, Harold!

Be kindly to the Normans left among us, Who follow'd me for love! and dear son, swear

When thou art king, to see my solemn vow Accomplish'd.

*Harold.* Nay, dear lord, for I have sworn

Not to swear falsely twice.

*Edward.* Thou wilt not swear?

*Harold.* I cannot.

*Edward.* Then on thee remains the curse,

Harold, if thou embrace her: and on thee, Edith, if thou abide it,—

[*The KING swoons; EDITH falls and kneels by the couch.*

*Stigand.* He hath swoon'd! Death? . . . no, as yet a breath.

*Harold.* Look up! look up! Edith!

*Aldred.* Confuse her not; she hath begun Her life-long prayer for thee.

*Aldwyth.* O noble Harold, I would thou couldst have sworn.

*Harold.* For thine own pleasure? *Aldwyth.* No, but to please our dying king, and those

Who make thy good their own—all England, Earl.

*Aldred.* I would thou couldst have sworn. Our holy king

Hath given his virgin lamb to Holy Church To save thee from the curse.

*Harold.* Alas! poor man, His promise brought it on me.

*Aldred.* O good son!  
That knowledge made him all the care-  
fuller  
To find a means whereby the curse might  
glance  
From thee and England.

*Harold.* Father, we so loved—

*Aldred.* The more the love, the mightier  
is the prayer;

The more the love, the more acceptable  
The sacrifice of both your loves to heaven.  
No sacrifice to heaven, no help from  
heaven;

That runs thro' all the faith of all the  
world.

And sacrifice there must be, for the king  
Is holy, and hath talk'd with God, and  
seen

A shadowing horror; there are signs in  
heaven—

*Harold.* Your comet came and went.

*Aldred.* And signs on earth!  
Knowest thou Senlac hill?

*Harold.* I know all Sussex;  
A good entrenchment for a perilous hour!

*Aldred.* Pray God that come not sud-  
denly! There is one  
Who passing by that hill three nights ago—  
He shook so that he scarce could out  
with it—

Heard, heard—

*Harold.* The wind in his hair?

*Aldred.* A ghostly horn  
Blowing continually, and faint battle-  
hymns,  
And cries, and clashes, and the groans of  
men;

And dreadful shadows strove upon the  
hill,  
And dreadful lights crept up from out the  
marsh—

Corpse-candles gliding over nameless  
graves—

*Harold.* At Senlac?

*Aldred.* Senlac.

*Edward (waking).* Senlac! Sanguelac,  
The Lake of Blood!

*Stigand.* This lightning before death  
Plays on the word,—and Normanizes too!

*Harold.* Hush, father, hush!

*Edward.* Thou uncanonical fool,

Wilt *thou* play with the thunder? North  
and South

Thunder together, showers of blood are  
blown

Before a never ending blast, and hiss  
Against the blaze they cannot quench—a  
lake,

A sea of blood—we are drown'd in blood—  
for God

Has fill'd the quiver, and Death has drawn  
the bow—

Sanguelac! Sanguelac! the arrow! the  
arrow! [Dies.

*Stigand.* It is the arrow of death in his  
own heart—

And our great Council wait to crown thee  
King.

## SCENE II

*In the Garden. The King's House  
near London*

*Edith.* Crown'd, crown'd and lost,  
crown'd King—and lost to me!

(Singing)

Two young lovers in winter weather,  
None to guide them,  
Walk'd at night on the misty heather;  
Night, as black as a raven's feather;  
Both were lost and found together,  
None beside them.

That is the burthen of it—lost and found  
Together in the cruel river Swale  
A hundred years ago; and there's another,

Lost, lost, the light of day,

To which the lover answers lovingly

'I am beside thee.'

Lost, lost, we have lost the way.

'Love, I will guide thee.'

Whither, O whither? into the river,  
Where we two may be lost together,  
And lost for ever? 'Oh! never, oh!  
never,

Tho' we be lost and be found  
together.'

Some think they loved within the pale  
forbidden

By Holy Church: but who shall say? the truth  
 Was lost in that fierce North, where *they*  
 were lost,  
 Where all good things are lost, where  
 Tostig lost  
 The good hearts of his people. It is Harold!

(Enter HAROLD)

Harold the King!

*Harold.* Call me not King, but  
 Harold.

*Edith.* Nay, thou art King!

*Harold.* Thine, thine, or King  
 or churl!

My girl, thou hast been weeping: turn not  
 thou

Thy face away, but rather let me be  
 King of the moment to thee, and com-  
 mand

That kiss my due when subject, which will  
 make

My kingship kinglier to me than to reign  
 King of the world without it.

*Edith.* Ask me not,  
 Lest I should yield it, and the second  
 curse

Descend upon thine head, and thou be only  
 King of the moment over England.

*Harold.* *Edith.*  
 Tho' somewhat less a king to my true self  
 Than ere they crown'd me one, for I have  
 lost

Somewhat of upright stature thro' mine  
 oath,

Yet thee I would not lose, and sell not thou  
 Our living passion for a dead man's dream;  
 Stigand believed he knew not what he  
 spake.

Oh God! I cannot help it, but at times  
 They seem to me too narrow, all the faiths  
 Of this grown world of ours, whose baby  
 eye

Saw them sufficient. Fool and wise, I fear  
 This curse, and scorn it. But a little light!—  
 And on it falls the shadow of the priest;  
 Heaven yield us more! for better, Woden,  
 all

Our cancell'd warrior-gods, our grim  
 Walhalla,

Eternal war, than that the Saints at peace

The Holiest of our Holiest one should be  
 This William's fellow-tricksters;—better  
 die

Than credit this, for death is death, or else  
 Lifts us beyond the lie. Kiss me—thou art  
 not

A holy sister yet, my girl, to fear  
 There might be more than brother in my  
 kiss,

And more than sister in thine own.

*Edith.* I dare not.

*Harold.* Scared by the church—'Love  
 for a whole life long'

When was that sung?

*Edith.* Here to the nightingales.

*Harold.* Their anthems of no church,  
 how sweet they are!

Nor kingly priest, nor priestly king to cross  
 Their billings ere they nest.

*Edith.* They are but of spring,  
 They fly the winter change—not so with  
 us—

No wings to come and go.

*Harold.* But wing'd souls flying  
 Beyond all change and in the eternal  
 distance

To settle on the Truth.

*Edith.* They are not so true,  
 They change their mates.

*Harold.* Do they? I did not know it.

*Edith.* They say thou art to wed the  
 Lady Aldwyth.

*Harold.* They say, they say.

*Edith.* If this be politic,  
 And well for thee and England—and for  
 her—

Care not for me who love thee.

*Edith.* *Edith.* *Harold.* *Harold!*

*Harold.* The voice of Gurth! (*Enter*  
*GURTH.*) Good even, my good brother!

*Gurth.* Good even, gentle Edith.

*Edith.* Good even, Gurth.

*Gurth.* Ill news hath come! Our hapless  
 brother, Tostig—

He, and the giant King of Norway, Harold  
 Hardrada—Scotland, Ireland, Iceland,  
 Orkney,

Are landed North of Humber, and in a  
 field

So packt with carnage that the dykes and  
 brooks

# HAROLD

# ACT IV

Were bridged and damm'd with dead, have  
overthrown  
Morcar and Edwin.

*Harold.* Well then, we must  
fight.

How blows the wind?

*Gurth.* Against St. Valery  
And William.

*Harold.* Well then, we will to the  
North.

*Gurth.* Ay, but worse news: this William  
sent to Rome,

Swearing thou swarest falsely by his  
Saints:

The Pope and that Archdeacon Hildebrand  
His master, heard him, and have sent him  
back

A holy gonfalon, and a blessed hair  
Of Peter, and all France, all Burgundy,  
Poitou, all Christendom is raised against  
thee;

He hath cursed thee, and all those who  
fight for thee,

And given thy realm of England to the  
bastard.

*Harold.* Ha! ha!

*Edith.* Oh! laugh not! . . . Strange and  
ghastly in the gloom

And shadowing of this double thundercloud  
That lours on England—laughter!

*Harold.* No, not strange!

This was old human laughter in old Rome  
Before a Pope was born, when that which  
reign'd

Call'd itself God.—A kindly rendering  
Of 'Render unto Cæsar.' . . . . The Good  
Shepherd!

Take this, and render that.

*Gurth.* They have taken York.

*Harold.* The Lord was God and came as  
man—the Pope

Is man and comes as God.—York taken?

*Gurth.* Yea,

Tostig hath taken York!

*Harold.* To York then, Edith,  
Hadst thou been braver, I had better  
braved

All—but I love thee and thou me—and  
that

Remains beyond all chances and all  
churches,

And that thou knowest.

*Edith.* Ay, but take back thy ring.

It burns my hand—a curse to thee and me.  
I dare not wear it.

[*Proffers HAROLD the ring, which he takes.*

*Harold.* But I dare. God with thee!

[*Exeunt HAROLD and GURTH.*

*Edith.* The King hath cursed him, if he  
marry me;

The Pope hath cursed him, marry me  
or no!

God help me! I know nothing—can but  
pray

For Harold—pray, pray, pray—no help  
but prayer,

A breath that fleets beyond this iron world,  
And touches Him that made it.

## ACT IV

### SCENE I

*In Northumbria*

ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, MORCAR, EDWIN, and  
FORCES. *Enter HAROLD. The standard of  
the golden Dragon of Wessex preceding  
him.*

*Harold.* What! are thy people sullen  
from defeat?

Our Wessex dragon flies beyond the  
Humber,

No voice to greet it.

*Edwin.* Let not our great king  
Believe us sullen—only shamed to the  
quick

Before the king—as having been so bruised  
By Harold, king of Norway; but our help  
Is Harold, king of England. Pardon us,  
thou!

Our silence is our reverence for the king!

*Harold.* Earl of the Mercians! if the  
truth be gall,

Cram me not thou with honey, when our  
good hive

Needs every sting to save it.

*Voices.* Aldwyth! Aldwyth!

*Harold.* Why cry thy people on thy  
sister's name?

*Morcar.* She hath won upon our people  
thro' her beauty,

And pleasantness among them.

*Voices.* Aldwyth, Aldwyth!

*Harold.* They shout as they would have her for a queen.

*Morcar.* She hath followed with our host, and suffer'd all.

*Harold.* What would ye, men?

*Voice.* Our old Northumbrian crown,

And kings of our own choosing.

*Harold.* Your old crown  
Were little help without our Saxon carles  
Against Hardrada.

*Voice.* Little! we are Danes,  
Who conquer'd what we walk on, our own field.

*Harold.* They have been plotting here!

[*Aside.*

*Voice.* He calls us little!

*Harold.* The kingdoms of this world  
began with little,  
A hill, a fort, a city—that reach'd a hand  
Down to the field beneath it, 'Be thou mine,'

Then to the next, 'Thou also!' If the field

Cried out 'I am mine own;' another hill  
Or fort, or city, took it, and the first  
Fell, and the next became an Empire.

*Voice.* Yet  
Thou art but a West Saxon: ~~we~~ are Danes!

*Harold.* My mother is a Dane, and I am English;

There is a pleasant fable in old books,  
Ye take a stick, and break it; bind a score  
All in one faggot, snap it over knee,  
Ye cannot.

*Voice.* Hear King Harold! he says true!

*Harold.* Would ye be Norsemen?

*Voices.* No!

*Harold.* Or Norman?

*Voices.* No!

*Harold.* Snap not the faggot-band then.

*Voice.* That is true!

*Voice.* Ay, but thou art not kingly, only grandson  
To Wulfnoth, a poor cow-herd.

*Harold.* This old Wulfnoth  
Would take me on his knees and tell me tales

Of Alfred and of Athelstan the Great

Who drove you Danes; and yet he held that Dane,

Jute, Angle, Saxon, were or should be all  
One England, for this cow-herd, like my father,

Who shook the Norman scoundrels off the throne,

Had in him kingly thoughts—a king of men,

Not made but born, like the great king of all,

A light among the oxen.

*Voice.* That is true!

*Voice.* Ay, and I love him now, for mine own father

Was great, and cobbled.

*Voice.* Thou art Tostig's brother,  
Who wastes the land.

*Harold.* 'This brother comes to save  
Your land from waste; I saved it once before,

For when your people banish'd Tostig hence,

And Edward would have sent a host against you,

Then I, who loved my brother, bad the king

Who doted on him, sanction your decree  
Of Tostig's banishment, and choice of Morcar,

To help the realm from scattering.

*Voice.* King! thy brother,  
If one may dare to speak the truth, was wrong'd.

Wild was he, born so: but the plots against him

Had madden'd tamer men.

*Morcar.* Thou art one of those  
Who brake into Lord Tostig's treasure-house

And slew two hundred of his following,  
And now, when Tostig hath come back with power,

Are frighted back to Tostig.

*Old Thane.* Ugh! Plots and feuds!  
This is my ninetieth birthday. Can ye not

Be brethren? Godwin still at feud with Alfgar,

And Alfgar hates King Harold. Plots and feuds!

This is my ninetieth birthday!

*Harold.* Old man, Harold  
Hates nothing; not *his* fault, if our two  
houses

Be less than brothers.

*Voices.* Aldwyth, Harold, Aldwyth!

*Harold.* Again! Morcar! Edwin! What  
do they mean?

*Edwin.* So the good king would deign to  
lend an ear

Not overscornful, we might chance—per-  
chance—

To guess their meaning.

*Morcar.* Thine own meaning, Harold,  
To make all England one, to close all feuds,  
Mixing our bloods, that thence a king may  
rise

Half-Godwin and half-Alfgar, one to rule  
All England beyond question, beyond  
quarrel.

*Harold.* Who sow'd this fancy here  
among the people?

*Morcar.* Who knows what sows itself  
among the people?

A goodly flower at times.

*Harold.* The Queen of Wales?  
Why, Morcar, it is all but duty in her  
To hate me; I have heard she hates me.

*Morcar.* No!  
For I can swear to that, but cannot swear  
That these will follow thee against the  
Norsemen,

If thou deny them this.

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin,  
When will ye cease to plot against my  
house?

*Edwin.* The king can scarcely dream  
that we, who know

His prowess in the mountains of the West,  
Should care to plot against him in the  
North.

*Morcar.* Who dares arraign us, king, of  
such a plot?

*Harold.* Ye heard one witness even now.

*Morcar.* The craven!  
There is a faction risen again for Tostig,  
Since Tostig came with Norway—fright  
not love.

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin, will ye, if  
I yield,

Follow against the Norseman?

*Morcar.* Surely, surely!

*Harold.* Morcar and Edwin, will ye  
upon oath,

Help us against the Norman?

*Morcar.* With good will,  
Yea, take the Sacrament upon it, king.

*Harold.* Where is thy sister?

*Morcar.* Somewhere hard at hand.  
Call and she comes.

[*One goes out, then enter ALDWYTH.*]

*Harold.* I doubt not but thou knowest  
Why thou art summon'd.

*Aldwyth.* Why?—I stay with these,  
Lest thy fierce Tostig spy me out alone,  
And flay me all alive.

*Harold.* Canst thou love one  
Who did dis crown thine husband, unqueen  
thee?

Didst thou not love thine husband?

*Aldwyth.* Oh! my lord,  
The nimble, wild, red, wiry, savage king—  
That was, my lord, a match of policy.

*Harold.* Was it?  
I knew him brave: he loved his land: he  
fain

Had made her great: his finger on her harp  
(I heard him more than once) had in it  
Wales,

Her floods, her woods, her hills: had I  
been his,

I had been all Welsh.

*Aldwyth.* Oh, ay—all Welsh—and yet  
I saw thee drive him up his hills—and  
women

Cling to the conquer'd, if they love, the  
more;

If not, they cannot hate the conqueror.

We never—oh! good Morcar, speak for us,  
His conqueror conquer'd Aldwyth.

*Harold.* Goodly news!

*Morcar.* Doubt it not thou! Since  
Griffyth's head was sent

To Edward, she hath said it.

*Harold.* I had rather  
She would have loved her husband.

*Aldwyth.* Aldwyth,  
Canst thou love me, thou knowing where  
I love?

*Aldwyth.* I can, my lord, for mine own  
sake, for thine,

For England, for thy poor white dove, who  
flutters

## SCENE I

## HAROLD

Between thee and the porch, but then  
would find

Her nest within the cloister, and be still.

*Harold.* Canst thou love one, who cannot  
love again?

*Aldwyth.* Full hope have I that love will  
answer love.

*Harold.* Then in the name of the great  
God, so be it!

Come, Aldred, join our hands before the  
hosts,

That all may see.

[ALDRED joins the hands of HAROLD  
and ALDWYTH and blesses them.

*Voices.* Harold, Harold and Aldwyth!

*Harold.* Set forth our golden Dragon,  
let him flap

The wings that beat down Wales!

Advance our Standard of the Warrior,  
Dark among gems and gold; and thou,  
brave banner,

Blaze like a night of fatal stars on those

Who read their doom and die.

Where lie the Norsemen? on the Der-  
went? ay

At Stamford-bridge.

Morcar, collect thy men; Edwin, my  
friend—

Thou lingerest.—Gurth,—

Last night King Edward came to me in  
dreams—

The rosy face and long down-silvering  
beard—

He told me I should conquer:—

I am no woman to put faith in dreams.

(To his army)

Last night King Edward came to me in  
dreams,

And told me we should conquer.

*Voices.* Forward! Forward!

Harold and Holy Cross!

*Aldwyth.* The day is won!

## SCENE II

*A Plain. Before the Battle of  
Stamford-Bridge*

HAROLD and his Guard

*Harold.* Who is it comes this way?

*Tostig?* (*Enter TOSTIG with a small  
force.*) O brother,

What art thou doing here?

*Tostig.* I am foraging

For Norway's army.

*Harold.* I could take and slay thee.

Thou art in arms against us.

*Tostig.* Take and slay me,

For Edward loved me.

*Harold.* Edward bad me spare thee.

*Tostig.* I hate King Edward, for he  
join'd with thee

To drive me outlaw'd. Take and slay me,  
I say,

Or I shall count thee fool.

*Harold.* Take thee, or free thee,

Free thee or slay thee, Norway will have  
war;

No man would strike with Tostig, save for  
Norway.

Thou art nothing in thine England, save  
for Norway,

Who loves not thee but war. What dost  
thou here,

Trampling thy mother's bosom into blood?

*Tostig.* She hath wean'd me from it with  
such bitterness.

I come for mine own Earldom, my  
Northumbria;

Thou hast given it to the enemy of our  
house.

*Harold.* Northumbria threw thee off,  
she will not have thee,

Thou hast misused her: and, O crowning  
crime!

Hast murder'd thine own guest, the son  
of Orm,

Gamel, at thine own hearth.

*Tostig.* The slow, fat fool!

He draw'd and prated so, I smote him  
suddenly,

I knew not what I did. He held with  
Morcar.—

I hate myself for all things that I do.

*Harold.* And Morcar holds with us.

Come back with him.

Know what thou dost; and we may find  
for thee,

So thou be chasten'd by thy banishment,  
Some easier earldom.

*Tostig.* What for Norway then?

He looks for land among us, he and  
his.



*Harold.* Seven feet of English land, or something more,  
Seeing he is a giant.

*Tostig.* That is noble!  
That sounds of Godwin.

*Harold.* Come thou back, and be  
Once more a son of Godwin.

*Tostig (turns away).* O brother, brother,  
O Harold—

*Harold (laying his hand on TOSTIG'S shoulder).* Nay then, come thou back to us!

*Tostig (after a pause turning to him).*  
Never shall any man say that I, that

*Tostig*  
Conjured the mightier Harold from his  
North

To do the battle for me here in England,  
Then left him for the meaner! thee!—

Thou hast no passion for the House of  
Godwin—

Thou hast but cared to make thyself a  
king—

Thou hast sold me for a cry.—  
Thou gavest thy voice against me in the

Council—  
I hate thee, and despise thee, and defy thee.

Farewell for ever! *[Exit.*

*Harold.* On to Stamford-bridge!

### SCENE III

*After the Battle of Stamford-Bridge.  
Banquet*

HAROLD and ALDWYTH. GURTH, LEOFWIN,  
MORCAR, EDWIN, and other Earls and  
Thanes.

*Voices.* Hail! Harold! Aldwyth! hail,  
bridegroom and bride!

*Aldwyth (talking with HAROLD).* Answer  
them thou!

Is this our marriage-banquet? Would the  
wines

Of wedding had been dash'd into the cups  
Of victory, and our marriage and thy glory  
Been drunk together! these poor hands  
but sew,

Spin, broider—would that they were man's  
to have held

The battle-axe by thee!

*Harold.* There was a moment  
When being forced aloof from all my  
guard,

And striking at Hardrada and his madmen  
I had wish'd for any weapon.

*Aldwyth.* Why art thou sad?

*Harold.* I have lost the boy who play'd  
at ball with me,

With whom I fought another fight than this  
Of Stamford-bridge.

*Aldwyth.* Ay! ay! thy victories  
Over our own poor Wales, when at thy side

He conquer'd with thee.

*Harold.* No—the childish fist  
That cannot strike again.

*Aldwyth.* Thou art too kindly.  
Why didst thou let so many Norsemen  
hence?

Thy fierce forekings had clench'd their  
pirate hides

To the bleak church doors, like kites upon  
a barn.

*Harold.* Is there so great a need to tell  
thee why?

*Aldwyth.* Yea, am I not thy wife?

*Voices.* Hail, Harold, Aldwyth!  
Bridegroom and bride!

*Aldwyth.* Answer them! *[To HAROLD.*

*Harold (to all).* Earls and Thanes!  
Full thanks for your fair greeting of my  
bride!

Earls, Thanes, and all our countrymen!  
the day,

Our day beside the Derwent will not shine  
Less than a star among the goldenest hours

Of Alfred, or of Edward his great son,  
Or Athelstan, or English Ironside

Who fought with Knut, or Knut who  
coming Dane

Died English. Every man about his king  
Fought like a king; the king like his own

man,

No better; one for all, and all for one,  
One soul! and therefore have we shatter'd

back  
The hugest wave from Norseland ever yet

Surged on us, and our battle-axes broken  
The Raven's wing, and dumb'd his carrion

croak  
From the gray sea for ever. Many are  
gone—

Drink to the dead who died for us, the  
living  
Who fought and would have died, but  
happier lived,  
If happier be to live; they both have life  
In the large mouth of England, till *her*  
voice  
Die with the world. Hail—hail!

*Morcar.* May all invaders perish like—  
*Hardrada!*

All traitors fail like Tostig!

[*All drink but HAROLD.*

*Aldwyth.* Thy cup's full!

*Harold.* I saw the hand of Tostig cover it.  
Our dear, dead, traitor-brother, Tostig,  
him

Reverently we buried. Friends, had I been  
here,

Without too large self-lauding I must hold  
The sequel had been other than his league  
With Norway, and this battle. Peace be  
with him!

He was not of the worst. If there be those  
At banquet in this hall, and hearing me—  
For there be those I fear who prick'd the  
lion

To make him spring, that sight of Danish  
blood

Might serve an end not English—peace  
with them

Likewise, if *they* can be at peace with what  
God gave us to divide us from the wolf!

*Aldwyth (aside to HAROLD).* Make not  
our Morcar sullen: it is not wise.

*Harold.* Hail to the living who fought,  
the dead who fell!

*Voices.* Hail, hail!

*First Thane.* How ran that answer which  
King Harold gave

To his dead namesake, when he ask'd for  
England?

*Leofwin.* Seven feet of English earth, or  
something more,  
Seeing he is a giant!

*First Thane.* Then for the bastard  
Six feet and nothing more!

*Leofwin.* Ay, but belike  
Thou hast not learnt his measure.

*First Thane.* By St. Edmund  
I over-measure him. Sound sleep to the  
man

Here by dead Norway without dream or  
dawn!

*Second Thane.* What is he bragging still  
that he will come

To thrust our Harold's throne from under  
him?

My nurse would tell me of a molehill  
crying

To a mountain 'Stand aside and room for  
me!'

*First Thane.* Let him come! let him  
come. Here's to him, sink or swim!

[*Drinks.*

*Second Thane.* God sink him!

*First Thane.* Cannot hands which had  
the strength

To shove that stranded iceberg off our  
shores,

And send the shatter'd North again to sea,  
Scuttle his cockle-shell? What's Brunan-  
burg

To Stamford-bridge? a war-crash, and so  
hard,

So loud, that by St. Dunstan, old St.  
Thor—

By God, we thought him dead—but our  
old Thor

Heard his own thunder again, and woke  
and came

Among us again, and mark'd the sons of  
those

Who made this Britain England, break the  
North:

Mark'd how the war-axe swang,  
Heard how the war-horn sang,  
Mark'd how the spear-head sprang,  
Heard how the shield-wall rang,  
Iron on iron clang,  
Anvil on hammer bang—

*Second Thane.* Hammer on anvil,  
hammer on anvil. Old dog,  
Thou art drunk, old dog!

*First Thane.* Too drunk to fight with  
thee!

*Second Thane.* Fight thou with thine  
own double, not with me,

Keep that for Norman William!

*First Thane.* Down with William!

*Third Thane.* The washerwoman's brat!

*Fourth Thane.* The tanner's bastard!

*Fifth Thane.* The Falaise byblow!

[*Enter a THANE, from Pevensey, spatter'd with mud.*

*Harold.* Ay, but what late guest,  
As haggard as a fast of forty days,  
And caked and plaster'd with a hundred  
mires,  
Hath stumbled on our cups?

*Thane from Pevensey.* My lord the King!  
William the Norman, for the wind had  
changed—

*Harold.* I felt it in the middle of that  
fierce fight  
At Stamford-bridge. William hath landed,  
ha?

*Thane from Pevensey.* Landed at Peven-  
sey—I am from Pevensey—  
Hath wasted all the land at Pevensey—  
Hath harried mine own cattle—God con-  
found him!

I have ridden night and day from Peven-  
sey—  
A thousand ships—a hundred thousand  
men—

Thousands of horses, like as many lions  
Neighing and roaring as they leapt to  
land—

*Harold.* How oft in coming hast thou  
broken bread?

*Thane from Pevensey.* Some thrice, or so.

*Harold.* Bring not thy hollowness  
On our full feast. Famine is fear, were it  
but  
Of being starved. Sit down, sit down, and  
eat,

And, when again red-blooded, speak again;  
(*Aside.*) The men that guarded England  
to the South

Were scatter'd to the harvest. . . . No  
power mine  
To hold their force together. . . . Many are  
fallen

At Stamford-bridge . . . the people stupid-  
sure

Sleep like their swine . . . in South and  
North at once

I could not be.

(*Aloud.*) Gurth, Leofwin, Morcar,  
Edwin!

(*Pointing to the revellers.*) The curse of  
England! these are drown'd in wassail,  
And cannot see the world but thro' their  
wines!

Leave them! and thee too, Aldwyth, must  
I leave—

Harsh is the news! hard is our honeymoon!  
Thy pardon. (*Turning round to his  
attendants.*) Break the banquet up . . .

Ye four!

And thou, my carrier-pigeon of black news,  
Cram thy crop full, but come when thou  
art call'd. [*Exit HAROLD.*

## ACT V

## SCENE I

*A Tent on a Mound, from which can be seen  
the Field of Senlac*

HAROLD, sitting; by him standing HUGH  
MARGOT the Monk, GURTH, LEOFWIN

*Harold.* Refer my cause, my crown to  
Rome! . . . The wolf  
Mudded the brook and predetermined all.  
Monk,

Thou hast said thy say, and had my con-  
stant 'No'

For all but instant battle. I hear no more.  
*Margot.* Hear me again—for the last  
time. Arise,

Scatter thy people home, descend the hill,  
Lay hands of full allegiance in thy Lord's  
And crave his mercy, for the Holy Father  
Hath given this realm of England to the  
Norman.

*Harold.* Then for the last time, monk,  
I ask again  
When had the Lateran and the Holy Father  
To do with England's choice of her own  
king?

*Margot.* Earl, the first Christian Cæsar  
drew to the East

To leave the Pope dominion in the West.  
He gave him all the kingdoms of the West.

*Harold.* So!—did he?—Earl—I have a  
mind to play

The William with thine eyesight and thy  
tongue.

Earl—ay—thou art but a messenger of  
William.

I am weary—go: make me not wroth with thee!

*Margot.* Mock-king, I am the messenger of God,  
His Norman Daniel! Mene, Mene, Tekel!  
Is thy wrath Hell, that I should spare to cry,  
Yon heaven is wroth with thee? Hear me again!

Our Saints have moved the Church that moves the world,  
And all the Heavens and very God: they heard—

They know King Edward's promise and thine—thine.

*Harold.* Should they not know free England crowns herself?  
Not know that he nor I had power to promise?  
Not know that Edward cancell'd his own promise?

And for my part therein—Back to that juggler, [Rising.

Tell him the Saints are nobler than he dreams,

Tell him that God is nobler than the Saints,

And tell him we stand arm'd on Senlac Hill,

And bide the doom of God.

*Margot.* Hear it thro' me.  
The realm for which thou art forsworn is cursed,

The babe enwomb'd and at the breast is cursed,

The corpse thou whelme'st with thine earth is cursed,

The soul who fighteth on thy side is cursed,

The seed thou sowest in thy field is cursed,  
The steer wherewith thou plowest thy field is cursed,

The fowl that fleeth o'er thy field is cursed,  
And thou, usurper, liar—

*Harold.* Out, beast monk!

[Lifting his hand to strike him.  
GURTH stops the blow.

I ever hated monks.

*Margot.* I am but a voice  
Among you: murder, martyr me if ye will—

*Harold.* Thanks, Gurth! The simple, silent, selfless man  
Is worth a world of tonguesters. (*To MARGOT.*) Get thee gone!

He means the thing he says. See him out safe!

*Leofwin.* He hath blown himself as red as fire with curses.

An honest fool! Follow me, honest fool,  
But if thou blurt thy curse among our folk,  
I know not—I may give that egg-bald head  
The tap that silences.

*Harold.* See him out safe.

[*Exeunt* LEOFWIN and MARGOT.

*Gurth.* Thou hast lost thine even temper,  
brother Harold!

*Harold.* Gurth, when I past by Waltham,  
my foundation

For men who serve the neighbour, not themselves,

I cast me down prone, praying; and, when I rose,

They told me that the Holy Rood had lean'd

And bow'd above me; whether that which held it

Had weaken'd, and the Rood itself were bound

To that necessity which binds us down;  
Whether it bow'd at all but in their fancy;

Or if it bow'd, whether it symbol'd ruin  
Or glory, who shall tell? but they were sad,  
And somewhat sadden'd me.

*Gurth.* Yet if a fear,  
Or shadow of a fear, lest the strange Saints

By whom thou sware'st, should have power to balk

Thy puissance in this fight with him, who made

And heard thee swear—brother—I have not sworn—

If the king fall, may not the kingdom fall?  
But if I fall, I fall, and thou art king;

And, if I win, I win, and thou art king;  
Draw thou to London, there make strength to breast

Whatever chance, but leave this day to me.

*Leofwin* (*entering*). And waste the land  
about thee as thou goest,

And be thy hand as winter on the field,  
To leave the foe no forage.

*Harold.* Noble Gurth!  
Best son of Godwin! If I fall, I fall—  
The doom of God! How should the people

fight  
When the king flies? And, Leofwin, art  
thou mad?

How should the King of England waste  
the fields

Of England, his own people?—No glance  
yet

Of the Northumbrian helmet on the heath?  
*Leofwin.* No, but a shoal of wives upon  
the heath,

And someone saw thy willy-nilly nun  
Vying a tress against our golden fern.

*Harold.* Vying a tear with our cold dew,  
a sigh

With these low-moaning heavens. Let her  
be fetch'd.

We have parted from our wife without  
reproach,

Tho' we have pierced thro' all her prac-  
tices;

And that is well.

*Leofwin.* I saw her even now:  
She hath not left us.

*Harold.* Nought of Morcar then?  
*Gurth.* Nor seen, nor heard; thine,  
William's or his own

As wind blows, or tide flows: belike he  
watches,

If this war-storm in one of its rough rolls  
Wash up that old crown of Northumber-  
land.

*Harold.* I married her for Morcar—a sin  
against

The truth of love. Evil for good, it seems,  
Is oft as childless of the good as evil  
For evil.

*Leofwin.* Good for good hath borne at  
times

A bastard false as William.

*Harold.* Ay, if Wisdom  
Pair'd not with Good. But I am somewhat  
worn,

A snatch of sleep were like the peace of  
God.

*Gurth, Leofwin,* go once more about the  
hill—

What did the dead man call it—Sanguelac,  
The lake of blood?

*Leofwin.* A lake that dips in William  
As well as Harold.

*Harold.* Like enough. I have seen  
The trenches dug, the palisades uprear'd  
And wattled thick with ash and willow-  
wands;

Yea, wrought at them myself. Go round  
once more;

See all be sound and whole. No Norman  
horse

Can shatter England, standing shield by  
shield;

Tell that again to all.

*Gurth.* I will, good brother.

*Harold.* Our guardsman hath but toil'd  
his hand and foot,

I hand, foot, heart and head. Some wine!  
(*One pours wine into a goblet which he  
hands to HAROLD.*)

Too much!  
What? we must use our battle-axe to-day.  
Our guardsmen have slept well, since we  
came in?

*Leofwin.* Ay, slept and snored. Your  
second-sighted man

That scared the dying conscience of the  
king,

Misheard their snores for groans. They  
are up again

And chanting that old song of Brunanburg  
Where England conquer'd.

*Harold.* That is well. The Norman,  
What is he doing?

*Leofwin.* Praying for Normandy;  
Our scouts have heard the tinkle of their  
bells.

*Harold.* And our old songs are prayers  
for England too!

But by all Saints—

*Leofwin.* Barring the Norman!

*Harold.* Nay,  
Were the great trumpet blowing dooms-  
day dawn,

I needs must rest. Call when the Norman  
moves— [*Exeunt all, but HAROLD.*]

No horse—thousands of horses—our  
shield wall—

Wall—break it not—break not—break—  
[*Sleeps.*]

*Vision of Edward.* Son Harold, I thy  
king, who came before

## SCENE I

## HAROLD

To tell thee thou shouldst win at Stamford-  
bridge,  
Come yet once more, from where I am at  
peace,  
Because I loved thee in my mortal day,  
To tell thee thou shalt die on Senlac hill—  
Sanguelac!

*Vision of Wulfnoth.* O brother, from my  
ghastly oubliette

I send my voice across the narrow seas—  
No more, no more, dear brother, never-  
more—

Sanguelac!

*Vision of Tostig.* O brother, most un-  
brotherlike to me,

Thou gavest thy voice against me in my  
life,

I give my voice against thee from the  
grave—

Sanguelac!

*Vision of Norman Saints.* O hapless  
Harold! King but for an hour!

Thou swarest falsely by our blessed bone,  
We give our voice against thee out of  
heaven!

Sanguelac! Sanguelac! The arrow! the  
arrow!

*Harold (starting up, battle-axe in hand).*  
Away!

My battle-axe against your voices. Peace!  
The king's last word—the arrow! I shall  
die—

I die for England then, who lived for  
England—

What nobler? men must die.

I cannot fall into a falser world—

I have done no man wrong. Tostig, poor  
brother,

Art thou so anger'd?

Fain had I kept thine earldom in thy hands  
Save for thy wild and violent will that  
wrench'd

All hearts of freemen from thee. I could do  
No other than this way advise the king  
Against the race of Godwin. Is it possible  
That mortal men should bear their earthly  
heats

Into yon bloodless world, and threaten us  
thence

Unschool'd of Death? Thus then thou art  
revenged—

I left our England naked to the South  
To meet thee in the North. The Norse-  
man's raid

Hath helpt the Norman, and the race of  
Godwin

Hath ruin'd Godwin. No—our waking  
thoughts

Suffer a stormless shipwreck in the pools  
Of sullen slumber, and arise again

Disjointed: only dreams—where mine own  
self

Takes part against myself! Why? for a spark  
Of self-disdain born in me when I swear  
Falsely to him, the falser Norman, over  
His gilded ark of mummy-saints, by whom  
I knew not that I swear,—not for myself—  
For England—yet not wholly—

(Enter EDITH)

Edith, Edith,

Get thou into thy cloister as the king  
Will'd it: be safe: the perjury-mongering

Count

Hath made too good an use of Holy  
Church

To break her close! There the great God  
of truth

Fill all thine hours with peace!—A lying  
devil

Hath haunted me—mine oath—my wife—  
I fain

Had made my marriage not a lie; I could  
not:

Thou art my bride! and thou in after years  
Praying perchance for this poor soul of  
mine

In cold, white cells beneath an icy moon—  
This memory to thee!—and this to Eng-  
land,

My legacy of war against the Pope  
From child to child, from Pope to Pope,  
from age to age,

Till the sea wash her level with her shores,  
Or till the Pope be Christ's.

Enter ALDWYTH

*Aldwyth (to EDITH).* Away from him!

*Edith.* I will . . . I have not spoken to the  
king

One word; and one I must. Farewell!

[Going.]

*Harold.* Not yet.  
*Stay.*

*Edith.* To what use?

*Harold.* The king commands thee, woman!

(To ALDWYTH)

Have thy two brethren sent their forces in?  
*Aldwyth.* Nay, I fear not.

*Harold.* Then there's no force in thee!  
Thou didst possess thyself of Edward's ear  
To part me from the woman that I loved!  
Thou didst arouse the fierce Northum-  
brians!

Thou hast been false to England and to me!—

As . . . in some sort . . . I have been false to thee.

Leave me. No more—Pardon on both sides—Go!

*Aldwyth.* Alas, my lord, I loved thee.

*Harold (bitterly).* With a love  
Passing thy love for Griffyth! wherefore now

Obey my first and last commandment. Go!

*Aldwyth.* O Harold! husband! Shall we meet again?

*Harold.* After the battle—after the battle. Go.

*Aldwyth.* I go. (*Aside.*) That I could stab her standing there!

[*Exit ALDWYTH.*]

*Edith.* Alas, my lord, she loved thee.

*Harold.* Never! never!

*Edith.* I saw it in her eyes!

*Harold.* I see it in thine.

And not on thee—nor England—fall God's doom!

*Edith.* On thee? on me. And thou art England! Alfred

Was England. Ethelred was nothing. Eng-land

Is but her king, and thou art Harold!

*Harold.* *Edith,*

The sign in heaven—the sudden blast at sea—

My fatal oath—the dead Saints—the dark dreams—

The Pope's Anathema—the Holy Rood  
That bow'd to me at Waltham—*Edith,* if I, the last English King of England—

*Edith.* No,  
First of a line that coming from the people,  
And chosen by the people—

*Harold.* And fighting for  
And dying for the people—

*Edith.* Living! living!

*Harold.* Yea so, good cheer! thou art

Harold, I am *Edith!*

Look not thus wan!

*Edith.* What matters how I look?  
Have we not broken Wales and Norse-land? slain,  
Whose life was all one battle, incarnate

war,

Their giant-king, a mightier man-in-arms  
Than William.

*Harold.* Ay, my girl, no tricks in him—  
No bastard he! when all was lost, he yell'd,  
And bit his shield, and dash'd it on the ground,

And swaying his two-handed sword about him,

Two deaths at every swing, ran in upon us

And died so, and I loved him as I hate  
This liar who made me liar. If Hate can kill,

And Loathing wield a Saxon battle-axe—

*Edith.* Waste not thy might before the battle!

*Harold.* No,

And thou must hence. Stigand will see thee safe,

And so—Farewell.

[*He is going, but turns back.*]

The ring thou dardest not wear,  
I have had it fashion'd, see, to meet my hand.

[*HAROLD shows the ring which is on his finger.*]

Farewell!

[*He is going, but turns back again.*]

I am dead as Death this day to ought of earth's

Save William's death or mine.

*Edith.* Thy death!—to-day!

Is it not thy birthday?

*Harold.* Ay, that happy day!

A birthday welcome! happy days and many!

One—this!

[*They embrace.*]

Look, I will bear thy blessing into the  
battle  
And front the doom of God.

*Norman cries (heard in the distance).*

Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Enter GURTH*

*Gurth.* The Norman moves!

*Harold.* Harold and Holy Cross!

*[Exeunt HAROLD and GURTH.]*

*Enter STIGAND*

*Stigand.* Our Church in arms—the lamb  
the lion—not

Spear into pruning-hook—the counter  
way—

Cowl, helm; and crozier, battle-axe. Abbot  
Alfwig,

Leofric, and all the monks of Peterboro'

Strike for the king; but I, old wretch, old

Stigand,

With hands too limp to brandish iron—  
and yet

I have a power—would Harold ask me  
for it—

I have a power.

*Edith.* What power, holy father?

*Stigand.* Power now from Harold to  
command thee hence

And sec thee safe from Senlac.

*Edith.* I remain!

*Stigand.* Yea, so will I, daughter, until  
I find

Which way the battle balance. I can see it  
From where we stand: and, live or die,

I would

I were among them!

*Canons from Waltham (singing without)*

Salva patriam

Sancte Pater,

Salva Fili,

Salva Spiritus,

Salva patriam,

Sancta Mater.<sup>1</sup>

*Edith.* Are those the blessed angels  
quiring, father?

<sup>1</sup> The *a* throughout these Latin hymns  
should be sounded broad, as in 'father'.

*Stigand.* No, daughter, but the canons  
out of Waltham,

The king's foundation, that have follow'd  
him.

*Edith.* O God of battles, make their wall  
of shields

Firm as thy cliffs, strengthen their pali-  
sades!

What is that whirring sound?

*Stigand.* The Norman arrow!

*Edith.* Look out upon the battle—is he  
safe?

*Stigand.* The king of England stands  
between his banners.

He glitters on the crowning of the hill.

God save King Harold!

*Edith.* —chosen by his people

And fighting for his people!

*Stigand.* There is one

Come as Goliath came of yore—he flings

His brand in air and catches it again,

He is chanting some old warsong.

*Edith.* And no David

To meet him?

*Stigand.* Ay, there springs a Saxon on  
him,

Falls—and another falls.

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

*Stigand.* Lo! our good Gurth hath  
smitten him to the death.

*Edith.* So perish all the enemies of  
Harold!

*Canons (singing).*

Hostis in Angliam

Ruit prædator,

Illorum, Domine,

Scutum scindatur!

Hostis per Angliæ

Plagas bacchatur;

Casa crematur,

Pastor fugatur

Grege trucidatur—

*Stigand.* Illos trucidat, Domine.

*Edith.* Ay, good father.

*Canons (singing).*

Illorum scelera

Pœna sequatur!

*English cries.*

Harold and Holy

Cross! Out! out!



*Stigand.* Our javelins  
Answer their arrows. All the Norman foot  
Are storming up the hill. The range of  
knights  
Sit, each a statue on his horse, and wait.  
*English cries.* Harold and God Almighty!  
*Norman cries.* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Canons (singing).*

Equus cum pedite  
Præpediatur!  
Illorum in lacrymas  
Cruor fundatur!  
Pereant, pereant,  
Anglia precatur.

*Stigand.* Look, daughter, look.

*Edith.* Nay, father, look for me!

*Stigand.* Our axes lighten with a single  
flash

About the summit of the hill, and heads  
And arms are sliver'd off and splinter'd  
by

Their lightning—and they fly—the Nor-  
man flies.

*Edith.* Stigand, O father, have we won  
the day?

*Stigand.* No, daughter, no—they fall  
behind the horse—

Their horse are thronging to the barri-  
cades;

I see the gonfanon of Holy Peter  
Floating above their helmets—ha! he is  
down!

*Edith.* He down! Who down?

*Stigand.* The Norman Count is down.

*Edith.* So perish all the enemies of  
England!

*Stigand.* No, no, he hath risen again—  
he bares his face—

Shouts something—he points onward—  
all their horse

Swallow the hill locust-like, swarming  
up.

*Edith.* O God of battles, make his battle-  
axe keen

As thine own sharp-dividing justice, heavy  
As thine own bolts that fall on crimeful  
heads

Charged with the weight of heaven where-  
from they fall!

*Canons (singing).*

Jacta tonitrua  
Deus bellator!  
Surgas e tenebris,  
Sis vindicator!  
Fulmina, fulmina  
Deus vastator!

*Edith.* O God of battles, they are three  
to one,  
Make thou one man as three to roll them  
down!

*Canons (singing).*

Equus cum equite  
Dejiciatur!  
Acies, Acies  
Prona sternatur!  
Illorum lanceas  
Frange Creator!

*Stigand.* Yea, yea, for how their lances  
snap and shiver

Against the shifting blaze of Harold's axe!  
War-woodman of old Woden, how he fells  
The mortal copse of faces! There! And  
there!

The horse and horseman cannot meet the  
shield,

The blow that brains the horseman cleaves  
the horse,

The horse and horseman roll along the hill,  
They fly once more, they fly, the Norman  
flies!

Equus cum equite  
Præcipitatur.

*Edith.* O God, the God of truth hath  
heard my cry.  
Follow them, follow them, drive them to  
the sea!

Illorum scelera  
Pœna sequatur!

*Stigand.* Truth! no; a lie; a trick, a  
Norman trick!

They turn on the pursuer, horse against  
foot,

They murder all that follow.

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

*Stigand.* Hot-headed fools—to burst the  
wall of shields!

They have broken the commandment of the king!

*Edith.* His oath was broken—O holy Norman Saints,

Ye that are now of heaven, and see beyond Your Norman shrines, pardon it, pardon it, That he forswore himself for all he loved, Me, me and all! Look out upon the battle!

*Stigand.* They thunder again upon the barricades.

My sight is eagle, but the strife so thick— This is the hottest of it: hold, ash! hold, willow!

*English cries.* Out, out!

*Norman cries.* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Stigand.* Ha! Gurth hath leapt upon him

And slain him: he hath fallen.

*Edith.* And I am heard.

Glory to God in the Highest! fallen, fallen!

*Stigand.* No, no, his horse—he mounts another—wields

His war-club, dashes it on Gurth, and Gurth,

Our noble Gurth, is down!

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

*Stigand.* And Leofwin is down!

*Edith.* Have mercy on us!

O Thou that knowest, let not my strong prayer

Be weaken'd in thy sight, because I love The husband of another!

*Norman cries.* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Edith.* I do not hear our English war-cry.

*Stigand.* No.

*Edith.* Look out upon the battle—is he safe?

*Stigand.* He stands between the banners with the dead

So piled about him he can hardly move.

*Edith (takes up the war-cry).* Out! out!

*Norman cries.* Ha Rou!

*Edith (cries out).* Harold and Holy Cross!

*Norman cries.* Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

*Edith.* What is that whirring sound?

*Stigand.* The Norman sends his arrows up to Heaven,

They fall on those within the palisade!

*Edith.* Look out upon the hill—is Harold there?

*Stigand.* Sanguelac—Sanguelac—the arrow—the arrow!—away!

## SCENE II

*Field of the Dead. Night*

ALDWYTH and EDITH

*Aldwyth.* O Edith, art thou here? O Harold, Harold—

Our Harold—we shall never see him more.

*Edith.* For there was more than sister in my kiss,

And so the saints were wroth. I cannot love them,

For they are Norman saints—and yet I should—

They are so much holier than their harlot's son

With whom they play'd their game against the king!

*Aldwyth.* The king is slain, the kingdom overthrown!

*Edith.* No matter!

*Aldwyth.* How no matter, Harold slain?—

I cannot find his body. O help me thou!

O Edith, if I ever wrought against thee,

Forgive me thou, and help me here!

*Edith.* No matter!

*Aldwyth.* Not help me, nor forgive me?

*Edith.* So thou saidest.

*Aldwyth.* I say it now, forgive me!

*Edith.* Cross me not!

I am seeking one who wedded me in secret.

Whisper! God's angels only know it. Ha!

What art *thou* doing here among the dead?

They are stripping the dead bodies naked yonder,

And thou art come to rob them of their rings!

*Aldwyth.* O Edith, Edith, I have lost both crown

And husband.

*Edith.* So have I.

*Aldwyth.* I tell thee, girl,

I am seeking my dead Harold.

*Edith.* And I mine!

The Holy Father strangled him with a hair

Of Peter, and his brother Tostig helpt;

The wicked sister clapt her hands and laugh'd;

Then all the dead fell on him.

*Aldwyth.* Edith, Edith—

*Edith.* What was he like, this husband? like to thee?

Call not for help from me. I knew him not. He lies not here: not close beside the standard.

Here fell the truest, manliest hearts of England.

Go further hence and find him.

*Aldwyth.* She is crazed!

*Edith.* That doth not matter either.

Lower the light.

He must be here.

*[Enter two Canons, OSGOD and ATHIELRIC, with torches. They turn over the dead bodies and examine them as they pass.]*

*Osgod.* I think that this is Thurkill.

*Athelric.* More likely Godric.

*Osgod.* I am sure this body

Is Alfwig, the king's uncle.

*Athelric.* So it is!

No, no—brave Gurth, one gash from brow to knee!

*Osgod.* And here is Leofwin.

*Edith.* And here is *He!*

*Aldwyth.* Harold? Oh no—nay, if it were—my God,

They have so maim'd and murder'd all his face

There is no man can swear to him.

*Edith.* But one woman!

Look you, we never mean to part again.

I have found him, I am happy.

Was there not someone ask'd me for forgiveness?

I yield it freely, being the true wife

Of this dead King, who never bore revenge.

*Enter* COUNT WILLIAM *and* WILLIAM

MALET

*William.* Who be these women? And what body is this?

*Edith.* Harold, thy better!

*William.* Ay, and what art thou?

*Edith.* His wife!

*Malet.* Not true, my girl, here is the

Queen! *[Pointing out ALDWYTH, William (to ALDWYTH).]* Wast thou his Queen?

*Aldwyth.* I was the Queen of Wales.

*William.* Why then of England. Madam, fear us not.

*(To MALET.)* Knowest thou this other?

*Malet.* When I visited England, Some held she was his wife in secret—some—

Well—some believed she was his paramour.

*Edith.* Norman, thou liest! liars all of you,

Your Saints and all! I am his wife! and she—

For look, our marriage ring!

*[She draws it off the finger of HAROLD.]*

I lost it somehow—  
I lost it, playing with it when I was wild.  
That bred the doubt! but I am wiser now . . .

I am too wise . . . Will none among you all Bear me true witness—only for this once— That I have found it here again?

*[She puts it on.]*

And thou, Thy wife am I for ever and evermore.

*[Falls on the body and dies.]*

*William.* Death!—and enough of death for this one day,

The day of St. Calixtus, and the day, My day when I was born.

*Malet.* And this dead king's Who, king or not, hath kinglike fought and fallen,

His birthday, too. It seems but yestereven I held it with him in his English halls, His day, with all his roof-tree ringing 'Harold,'

Before he fell into the snare of Guy; When all men counted Harold would be king,

And Harold was most happy.

*William.* Thou art half English.

Take them away!

Malet, I vow to build a church to God Here on the hill of battle; let our high altar Stand where their standard fell . . . where these two lie.

Take them away, I do not love to see them.

Pluck the dead woman off the dead man,  
Malet!

*Malet.* Faster than ivy. Must I hack her  
arms off?

How shall I part them?

*William.* Leave them. Let them be!

Bury him and his paramour together.

He that was false in oath to me, it seems

Was false to his own wife. We will not  
give him

A Christian burial: yet he was a warrior,

And wise, yea truthful, till that blighted vow

Which God avenged to-day.

Wrap them together in a purple cloak

And lay them both upon the waste sea-  
shore

At Hastings, there to guard the land for  
which

He did forswear himself—a warrior—ay,

And but that Holy Peter fought for us,

And that the false Northumbrian held aloof,

And save for that chance arrow which the  
Saints

Sharpen'd and sent against him—who can  
tell?—

Three horses had I slain beneath me: twice

I thought that all was lost. Since I knew  
battle,

And that was from my boyhood, never  
yet—

No, by the splendour of God—have I  
fought men

Like Harold and his brethren, and his  
guard

Of English. Every man about his king

Fell where he stood. They loved him: and,  
pray God

My Normans may but move as true with  
me

To the door of death. Of one self-stock at  
first,

Make them again one people—Norman,  
English;

And English, Norman; we should have a  
hand

To grasp the world with, and a foot to  
stamp it . . .

Flat. Praise the Saints. It is over. No more  
blood!

I am king of England, so they thwart me  
not,

And I will rule according to their laws.

(*To ALDWYTH.*) Madam, we will entreat  
thee with all honour.

*Aldwyth.* My punishment is more than  
I can bear.

# BECKET

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL OF SELBORNE

MY DEAR SELBORNE—To you, the honoured Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor;—which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless—for so you have assured me—won your approbation.—Ever yours,

TENNYSON.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HENRY II (*son of the Earl of Anjou*).  
THOMAS BECKET, *Chancellor of England, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury*.  
GILBERT FOLIOT, *Bishop of London*.  
ROGER, *Archbishop of York*.  
Bishop of Hereford.  
HILARY, *Bishop of Chichester*.  
JOCELYN, *Bishop of Salisbury*.  
JOHN OF SALISBURY } *friends of Becket*.  
HERBERT OF BOSHAM }  
WALTER MAP, *reputed author of 'Golas,' Latin poems against the priesthood*.  
KING LOUIS OF FRANCE.  
GEOFFREY, *son of Rosamund and Henry*.  
GRIM, *a monk of Cambridge*.  
SIR REGINALD FITZURSE }  
SIR RICHARD DE BRITO } *the four knights of the King's household, enemies of Becket*.  
SIR WILLIAM DE TRACY }  
SIR HUGH DE MORVILLE }  
DE BROU OF SALTWOOD CASTLE.  
LORD LEICESTER.  
PHILIP DE ELEMOSYNA.  
TWO KNIGHT TEMPLARS.  
JOHN OF OXFORD (*called the Swearer*).  
ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE, *Queen of England (divorced from Louis of France)*.  
ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD.  
MARGERY.

*Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.*

## PROLOGUE

*A Castle in Normandy. Interior of the Hall.  
Roofs of a City seen thro' Windows*

HENRY and BECKET at chess

Henry. So then our good Archbishop  
Theobald

Lies dying.

Becket. I am grieved to know as much.

Henry. But we must have a mightier  
man than he

For his successor.

Becket. Have you thought of one?

Henry. A cleric lately poison'd his own  
mother,

And being brought before the courts of the  
Church,

They but degraded him. I hope they whipt  
him.

I would have hang'd him.

Becket. It is your move.

Henry. Well—there. [*Moves.*

The Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's  
time

Hath climb'd the throne and almost  
clutch'd the crown;

But by the royal customs of our realm

The Church should hold her baronies  
of me,

Like other lords amenable to law.

I'll have them written down and made the law.

*Becket.* My liege, I move my bishop.

*Henry.* And if I live,  
No man without my leave shall excommunicate

My tenants or my household.

*Becket.* Look to your king.

*Henry.* No man without my leave shall cross the seas

To set the Pope against me—I pray your pardon.

*Becket.* Well—will you move?

*Henry.* There. [*Moves.*]

*Becket.* Check—you move so wildly.

*Henry.* There then! [*Moves.*]

*Becket.* Why—there then, for you see my bishop

Hath brought your king to a standstill.  
You are beaten.

*Henry (kicks over the board).* Why, there then—down go bishop and king together.

I loathe the being beaten; had I fixt my fancy

Upon the game I should have beaten thee,  
But that was vagabond.

*Becket.* Where, my liege? With Phryne,

Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or another?

*Henry.* My Rosamund is no Lais,  
Thomas Becket;

And yet she plagues me too—no fault in her—

But that I fear the Queen would have her life.

*Becket.* Put her away, put her away, my liege!

Put her away into a nunnery!

Safe enough there from her to whom thou art bound

By Holy Church. And wherefore should she seek

The life of Rosamund de Clifford more  
Than that of other paramours of thine?

*Henry.* How dost thou know I am not wedded to her?

*Becket.* How should I know?

*Henry.* That is my secret, Thomas.

*Becket.* State secrets should be patent to the statesman

Who serves and loves his king, and whom the king

Loves not as statesman, but true lover and friend.

*Henry.* Come, come, thou art but deacon,  
not yet bishop,

No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor yet.

I would to God thou wert, for I should find

An easy father confessor in thee.

*Becket.* St. Denis, that thou shouldst not. I should beat

Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten it.

*Henry.* Hell take thy bishop then, and my kingship too!

Come, come, I love thee and I know thee,  
I know thee,

A doter on white pheasant-flesh at feasts,  
A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,  
A dish-designer, and most amorous  
Of good old red sound liberal Gascon wine:

Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou flatter it?

*Becket.* That palate is insane which cannot tell

A good dish from a bad, new wine from old.

*Henry.* Well, who loves wine loves woman.

*Becket.* So I do.  
Men are God's trees, and women are God's flowers;

And when the Gascon wine mounts to my head,

The trees are all the statelier, and the flowers

Are all the fairer.

*Henry.* And thy thoughts, thy fancies?

*Becket.* Good dogs, my liege, well train'd, and easily call'd

Off from the game.

*Henry.* Save for some once or twice,  
When they ran down the game and worried it.

*Becket.* No, my liege, no!—not once—in God's name, no!

*Henry.* Nay, then, I take thee at thy word—believe thee

The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's hall.  
And so this Rosamund, my true heart-wife,  
Not Eleanor—she whom I love indeed

As a woman should be loved—Why dost  
thou smile  
So dolorously?

*Becket.* My good liege, if a man  
Wastes himself among women, how should  
he love

A woman, as a woman should be loved?

*Henry.* How shouldst thou know that  
never hast loved one?

Come, I would give her to thy care in  
England

When I am out in Normandy or Anjou.

*Becket.* My lord, I am your subject, not  
your—

*Henry.* Pander.

God's eyes! I know all that—not my  
purveyor

Of pleasures, but to save a life—her life;

Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hellfire.

I have built a secret bower in England,  
Thomas,

A nest in a bush.

*Becket.* And where, my liege?

*Henry (whispers).* Thine ear.

*Becket.* That's lone enough.

*Henry (laying paper on table).* This chart  
here mark'd 'Her Bower,'

Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a circling  
wood,

A hundred pathways running everyway,

And then a brook, a bridge; and after that

This labyrinthine brickwork maze in maze,

And then another wood, and in the midst

A garden and my Rosamund. Look, this  
line—

The rest you see is colour'd green—but this  
Draws thro' the chart to her.

*Becket.* This blood-red line?

*Henry.* Ay! blood, perchance, except  
thou see to her.

*Becket.* And where is she? There in her  
English nest?

*Henry.* Would God she were—no, here  
within the city.

We take her from her secret bower in  
Anjou

And pass her to her secret bower in Eng-  
land.

She is ignorant of all but that I love her.

*Becket.* My liege, I pray thee let me  
hence: a widow

And orphan child, whom one of thy wild  
barons—

*Henry.* Ay, ay, but swear to see to her  
in England.

*Becket.* Well, well, I swear, but not to  
please myself.

*Henry.* Whatever come between us?

*Becket.* What should come  
Between us, Henry?

*Henry.* Nay—I know not, Thomas.

*Becket.* What need then? Well—what-  
ever come between us. [*Going.*]

*Henry.* A moment! thou didst help me  
to my throne

In Theobald's time, and after by thy  
wisdom

Hast kept it firm from shaking; but now I,  
For my realm's sake, myself must be the  
wizard

To raise that tempest which will set it  
trembling

Only to base it deeper. I, true son

Of Holy Church—no croucher to the  
Gregories

That tread the kings their children under-  
heel—

Must curb her; and the Holy Father, while

This Barbarossa butts him from his chair,  
Will need my help—be facile to my hands.

Now is my time. Yet—lest there should be  
flashes

And fulminations from the side of Rome,

An interdict on England—I will have

My young son Henry crown'd the King  
of England,

That so the Papal bolt may pass by Eng-  
land,

As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.  
I'll have it done—and now.

*Becket.* Surely too young  
Even for this shadow of a crown; and tho'

I love him heartily, I can spy already  
A strain of hard and headstrong in him.

Say,  
The Queen should play his kingship  
against thine!

*Henry.* I will not think so, Thomas.  
Who shall crown him?

Canterbury is dying.

*Becket.* The next Canterbury.

*Henry.* And who shall he be, my friend Thomas? Who?

*Becket.* Name him; the Holy Father will confirm him.

*Henry* (*lays his hand on BECKET's shoulder*). Here!

*Becket.* Mock me not. I am not even a monk.

Thy jest—no more. Why—look—is this a sleeve

For an archbishop?

*Henry.* But the arm within Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my foes.

*Becket.* A soldier's, not a spiritual arm.

*Henry.* I lack a spiritual soldier, Thomas—

A man of this world and the next to boot.

*Becket.* There's Gilbert Foliot.

*Henry.* He! too thin, too thin. Thou art the man to fill out the Church robe;

Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much for me.

*Becket.* Roger of York.

*Henry.* Roger is Roger of York. King, Church, and State to him but foils wherein

To set that precious jewel, Roger of York. No.

*Becket.* Henry of Winchester?

*Henry.* Him who crown'd Stephen—King Stephen's brother! No; too royal for me.

And I'll have no more Anselms.

*Becket.* Sire, the business Of thy whole kingdom waits me: let me go.

*Henry.* Answer me first.

*Becket.* Then for thy barren jest Take thou mine answer in bare commonplace—

*Nolo episcopari.*

*Henry.* Ay, but *Nolo Archiepiscopari*, my good friend, Is quite another matter.

*Becket.* A more awful one. Make me archbishop! Why, my liege, I know

Some three or four poor priests a thousand times

Fitter for this grand function. *Me* archbishop!

God's favour and king's favour might so clash

That thou and I— That were a jest indeed!

*Henry.* Thou angerest me, man: I do not jest.

*Enter ELEANOR and SIR REGINALD FITZURSE*

*Eleanor* (*singing*). Over! the sweet summer closes,

The reign of the roses is done—

*Henry* (*to BECKET, who is going*). Thou shalt not go. I have not ended with thee.

*Eleanor* (*seeing chart on table*). This chart with the red line! her bower! whose bower?

*Henry.* The chart is not mine, but Becket's: take it, Thomas.

*Eleanor.* Becket! O—ay—and these chessmen on the floor—the king's crown broken! Becket hath beaten thee again—and thou hast kicked down the board. I know thee of old.

*Henry.* True enough, my mind was set upon other matters.

*Eleanor.* What matters? State matters? love matters?

*Henry.* My love for thee, and thine for me.

*Eleanor.* Over! the sweet summer closes, The reign of the roses is done; Over and gone with the roses, And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine lasts longer. I would I were in Aquitaine again—your north chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes, And never a flower at the close; Over and gone with the roses, And winter again and the snows.

That was not the way I ended it first—but unsymmetrically, preposterously, illogically, out of passion, without art—like a song of the people. Will you have it? The last Parthian shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's left breast, and all left-handedness and under-handedness.



And never a flower at the close,  
Over and gone with the roses,  
Not over and gone with the rose.

True, one rose will outblossom the rest,  
one rose in a bower. I speak after my  
fancies, for I am a Troubadour, you know,  
and won the violet at Toulouse; but my  
voice is harsh here, not in tune, a nightin-  
gale out of season; for marriage, rose or no  
rose, has killed the golden violet.

*Becket.* Madam, you do ill to scorn  
wedded love.

*Eleanor.* So I do. Louis of France loved  
me, and I dreamed that I loved Louis of  
France: and I loved Henry of England,  
and Henry of England dreamed that he  
loved me; but the marriage-garland withers  
even with the putting on, the bright link  
rusts with the breath of the first after-  
marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the  
ripening of the harvest, and the honeymoon  
is the gall of love; he dies of his honey-  
moon. I could pity this poor world myself  
that it is no better ordered.

*Henry.* Dead is he, my Queen? What,  
altogether? Let me swear nay to that by  
this cross on thy neck. God's eyes! what a  
lovely cross! what jewels!

*Eleanor.* Doth it please you? Take it and  
wear it on that hard heart of yours—there.

[*Gives it to him.*]

*Henry (puts it on).* On this left breast  
before so hard a heart,  
To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

*Eleanor.* Has my simple song set you  
jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that  
hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I  
could so play about it with the rhyme—

*Henry.* That the heart were lost in the  
rhyme and the matter in the metre. May  
we not pray you, Madam, to spare us the  
hardness of your facility?

*Eleanor.* The wells of Castaly are not  
wasted upon the desert. We did but jest.

*Henry.* There's no jest on the brows of  
Herbert there. What is it, Herbert?

*Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM*

*Herbert.* My liege, the good Archbishop  
is no more.

*Henry.* Peace to his soul!

*Herbert.* I left him with peace on his  
face—that sweet other-world smile, which  
will be reflected in the spiritual body  
among the angels. But he longed much to  
see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he  
past, and his last words were a commendation  
of Thomas Becket to your Grace as  
his successor in the archbishoprick.

*Henry.* Ha, Becket! thou rememberest  
our talk!

*Becket.* My heart is full of tears—I have  
no answer.

*Henry.* Well, well, old men must die, or  
the world would grow mouldy, would only  
breed the past again. Come to me to-  
morrow. Thou hast but to hold out thy  
hand. Meanwhile the revenues are mine.  
A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat.

[*Leaps over the table, and exits.*]

*Becket.* He did prefer me to the chan-  
cellorship,  
Believing I should ever aid the Church—  
But have I done it? He commends me now  
From out his grave to this archbishoprick.

*Herbert.* A dead man's dying wish should  
be of weight.

*Becket.* His should. Come with me. Let  
me learn at full

The manner of his death, and all he said.

[*Exeunt HERBERT and BECKET.*]

*Eleanor.* Fitzurse, that chart with the  
red line—thou sawest it—her bower.

*Fitzurse.* Rosamund's?

*Eleanor.* Ay—there lies the secret of her  
whereabouts, and the King gave it to his  
Chancellor.

*Fitzurse.* To this son of a London mer-  
chant—how your Grace must hate him.

*Eleanor.* Hate him? as brave a soldier as  
Henry and a goodlier man: but thou—dost  
thou love this Chancellor, that thou hast  
sworn a voluntary allegiance to him?

*Fitzurse.* Not for my love toward him,  
but because he had the love of the King.  
How should a baron love a beggar on  
horseback, with the retinue of three kings  
behind him, outroyalling royalty? Besides,  
he help the King to break down our castles,  
for the which I hate him.

*Eleanor.* For the which I honour him.

Statesman not Churchman he. A great and sound policy that: I could embrace him for it: you could not see the King for the kinglings.

*Fitzurse.* Ay, but he speaks to a noble as tho' he were a churl, and to a churl as if he were a noble.

*Eleanor.* Pride of the plebeian!

*Fitzurse.* And this plebeian like to be Archbishop!

*Eleanor.* True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor.

*Fitzurse.* Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund—his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

*Eleanor.* Thou feel for me!—paramour—rival! King Louis had no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less—now neither more nor less—not at all; the cup's empty. I would she were but his paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Rival!—ay, and when the King passes, there may come a crash and embroilment as in Stephen's time; and her children—canst thou not—that secret matter which would heat the King against thee (*whispers him and he starts*). Nay, that is safe with me as with thyself: but canst thou not—thou art drowned in debt—thou shalt have our love, our silence, and our gold—canst thou not—if thou light upon her—free me from her?

*Fitzurse.* Well, Madam, I have loved her in my time.

*Eleanor.* No, my bear, thou hast not. My Courts of Love would have held thee guiltless of love—the fine attractions and repulses, the delicacies, the subtleties.

*Fitzurse.* Madam, I loved according to the main purpose and intent of nature.

*Eleanor.* I warrant thee! thou wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs cracked—enough of this. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may (*clenches her fist*)—may at least have my cry against him and her,—and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self.

*Fitzurse.* Ay, but the young colt winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

*Eleanor.* Us!

*Fitzurse.* Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were more than I buzzing round the blossom—De Tracy—even that flint De Brito.

*Eleanor.* Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her as hateful to herself and to the King, as she is to me.

*Fitzurse.* I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rosefaced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King—

*Eleanor.* Let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

## ACT I

### SCENE I

#### *Becket's House in London*

*Chamber barely furnished. BECKET unrobing.*  
HERBERT OF BOSHAM and SERVANT

*Servant.* Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

*Becket.* Friend, am I so much better than thyself

That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out  
With this day's work, get thee to thine own bed.

Leave me with Herbert, friend.

[*Exit SERVANT.*  
Help me off, Herbert, with this—and this.

*Herbert.* Was not the people's blessing  
as we past

Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

*Becket.* The people know their Church  
a tower of strength,

A bulwark against Throne and Baronage.  
Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

*Herbert.* Is it so much heavier than thy  
Chancellor's robe?

*Becket.* No; but the Chancellor's and  
the Archbishop's  
Together more than mortal man can bear.

*Herbert.* Not heavier than thine armour  
at Thoulouse?

*Becket.* O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship  
I more than once have gone against the  
Church.

*Herbert.* To please the King?

*Becket.* Ay, and the King of kings,  
Or justice; for it seem'd to me but just  
The Church should pay her scutage like  
the lords.

But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert  
Foliot

That I am not the man to be your Primate,  
For Henry could not work a miracle—  
Make an Archbishop of a soldier?

*Herbert.* Ay,  
For Gilbert Foliot held himself the man.

*Becket.* Am I the man? My mother, ere  
she bore me,  
Dream'd that twelve stars fell glittering  
out of heaven  
Into her bosom.

*Herbert.* Ay, the fire, the light,  
The spirit of the twelve Apostles enter'd  
Into thy making.

*Becket.* And when I was a child,  
The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep,  
Gave me the golden keys of Paradise.

Dream,  
Or prophecy, that?

*Herbert.* Well, dream and prophecy  
both.

*Becket.* And when I was of Theobald's  
household, once—  
The good old man would sometimes have  
his jest—

He took his mitre off, and set it on me,

And said, 'My young Archbishop—thou  
wouldst make  
A stately Archbishop!' Jest or prophecy  
there?

*Herbert.* Both, Thomas, both.

*Becket.* Am I the man? That rang  
Within my head last night, and when I  
slept

Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,  
And spake to the Lord God, and said, 'O  
Lord,

I have been a lover of wines, and delicate  
meats,

And secular splendours, and a favourer  
Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder  
Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and lions,  
and lynxes.

Am I the man?' And the Lord answer'd  
me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more the  
man.'

And then I asked again, 'O Lord my God,  
Henry the King hath been my friend, my  
brother,

And mine uplifter in this world, and  
chosen me

For this thy great archbishoprick, be-  
lieving

That I should go against the Church with  
him,

And I shall go against him with the  
Church,

And I have said no word of this to him:  
Am I the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,  
'Thou art the man, and all the more the  
man.'

And thereupon, methought, He drew  
toward me,

And smote me down upon the Minster  
floor.

I fell.

*Herbert.* God make not thee, but thy  
foes, fall.

*Becket.* I fell. Why fall? Why did He  
smite me? What?

Shall I fall off—to please the King once  
more?

Not fight—tho' somehow traitor to the  
King—

My truest and mine utmost for the  
Church?

*Herbert.* Thou canst not fall that way. Let traitor be;  
 For how have fought thine utmost for the Church,  
 Save from the throne of thine archbishoprick?  
 And how been made Archbishop hadst thou told him,  
 'I mean to fight mine utmost for the Church,  
 Against the King'?

*Becket.* But dost thou think the King Forced mine election?

*Herbert.* I do think the King Was potent in the election, and why not? Why should not Heaven have so inspired the King?

Be comforted. Thou art the man—be thou A mightier Anselm.

*Becket.* I do believe thee, then. I am the man.  
 And yet I seem appall'd—on such a sudden  
 At such an eagle-height I stand and see  
 The rift that runs between me and the King.  
 I served our Theobald well when I was with him;  
 I served King Henry well as Chancellor;  
 I am his no more, and I must serve the Church.  
 This Canterbury is only less than Rome,  
 And all my doubts I fling from me like dust,  
 Winnow and scatter all scruples to the wind,  
 And all the puissance of the warrior,  
 And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,  
 And all the heap'd experiences of life,  
 I cast upon the side of Canterbury—  
 Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits  
 With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons,  
 thro'  
 The random gifts of careless kings, have graspt  
 Her livings, her advowsons, granges, farms,  
 And goodly acres—we will make her whole;  
 Not one rood lost. And for these Royal customs,

These ancient Royal customs—they are Royal,  
 Not of the Church—and let them be anathema,  
 And all that speak for them anathema.

*Herbert.* Thomas, thou art moved too much.

*Becket.* O Herbert, here  
 I gash myself asunder from the King,  
 Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine own, a grief  
 To show the scar for ever—his, a hate  
 Not ever to be heal'd.

*Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD, flying from SIR REGINALD FITZURSE. Drops her veil*

*Becket.* Rosamund de Clifford!  
*Rosamund.* Save me, father, hide me—they follow me—and I must not be known.  
*Becket.* Pass in with Herbert there.  
 [Exeunt ROSAMUND and HERBERT by side door.]

*Enter FITZURSE*

*Fitzurse.* The Archbishop!  
*Becket.* Ay! what wouldst thou, Reginald?  
*Fitzurse.* Why—why, my lord, I follow'd—follow'd one—  
*Becket.* And then what follows? Let me follow thee.  
*Fitzurse.* It much imports me I should know her name.  
*Becket.* What her?  
*Fitzurse.* The woman that I follow'd hither.  
*Becket.* Perhaps it may import her all as much  
 Not to be known.  
*Fitzurse.* And what care I for that? Come, come, my lord Archbishop; I saw that door  
 Close even now upon the woman.  
*Becket.* Well?  
*Fitzurse (making for the door).* Nay, let me pass, my lord, for I must know.  
*Becket.* Back, man!  
*Fitzurse.* Then tell me who and what she is.  
*Becket.* Art thou so sure thou follow'dst anything?

Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for thine eyes

Glare stupid-wild with wine.

*Fitzurse* (*making to the door*). I must and will.

I care not for thy new archbishoprick.

*Becket*. Back, man, I tell thee! What!

Shall I forget my new archbishoprick  
And smite thee with my crozier on the skull?

'Fore God, I am a mightier man than thou.

*Fitzurse*. It well befits thy new archbishoprick

To take the vagabond woman of the street  
Into thine arms!

*Becket*. O drunken ribaldry!

Out, beast, out, bear!

*Fitzurse*. I shall remember this.

*Becket*. Do, and begone!

[*Exit FITZURSE.*]

[*Going to the door, sees DE TRACY.*]

Tracy, what dost thou here?

*De Tracy*. My lord, I follow'd Reginald Fitzurse.

*Becket*. Follow him out!

*De Tracy*. I shall remember this

Discourtesy. [*Exit.*]

*Becket*. Do. These be those baron-brutes  
That havock'd all the land in Stephen's day.

Rosamund de Clifford.

*Re-enter ROSAMUND and HERBERT*

*Rosamund*. Here am I.

*Becket*. Why here?

We gave thee to the charge of John of Salisbury,

To pass thee to thy secret bower to-morrow.

Wast thou not told to keep thyself from sight?

*Rosamund*. Poor bird of passage! so I was; but, father,

They say that you are wise in winged things,

And know the ways of Nature. Bar the bird

From following the fled summer—a chink—  
—he's out,

Gone! And there stole into the city a breath

Full of the meadows, and it minded me  
Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and the walks

Where I could move at pleasure, and I thought

Lo! I must out or die.

*Becket*. Or out *and* die.

And what hast thou to do with this Fitzurse?

*Rosamund*. Nothing. He sued my hand.  
I shook at him.

He found me once alone. Nay—nay—I cannot

Tell you: my father drove him and his friends,

De Tracy and De Brito, from our castle.

I was but fourteen and an April then.

I heard him swear revenge.

*Becket*. Why will you court it

By self-exposure? flutter out at night?

Make it so hard to save a moth from the fire?

*Rosamund*. I have saved many of 'em.

You catch 'em, so,

Softly, and fling them out to the free air.

They burn themselves *within-door*.

*Becket*. Our good John

Must speed you to your bower at once.

The child

Is there already.

*Rosamund*. Yes—the child—the child—

O rare, a whole long day of open field.

*Becket*. Ay, but you go disguised.

*Rosamund*. O rare again!

We'll baffle them, I warrant. What shall it be?

I'll go as a nun.

*Becket*. No.

*Rosamund*. What, not good enough  
Even to play at nun?

*Becket*. Dan John with a nun,

That Map, and these new railers at the Church

May plaister his clean name with scurrilous rhymes!

No!

Go like a monk, cowering and clouding up  
That fatal star, thy Beauty, from the squint

Of lust and glare of malice. Good night!  
good night!

*Rosamund.* Father, I am so tender to all hardness!

Nay, father, first thy blessing.

*Becket.* Wedded?

*Rosamund.* Father!

*Becket.* Well, well! I ask no more. Heaven bless thee! hence!

*Rosamund.* O, holy father, when thou seest him next, Commend me to thy friend.

*Becket.* What friend?

*Rosamund.* The King.

*Becket.* Herbert, take out a score of armed men

To guard this bird of passage to her cage; And watch Fitzurse, and if he follow thee, Make him thy prisoner. I am Chancellor yet.

[*Exeunt HERBERT and ROSAMUND.*]

Poor soul! poor soul!

My friend, the King! . . . O thou Great Seal of England,

Given me by my dear friend the King of England—

We long have wrought together, thou and I—

Now must I send thee as a common friend To tell the King, my friend, I am against him.

We are friends no more: he will say that, not I.

The worldly bond between us is dissolved, Not yet the love: can I be under him As Chancellor? as Archbishop over him? Go therefore like a friend slighted by one That hath climb'd up to nobler company. Not slighted—all but moan'd for: thou must go.

I have not dishonour'd thee—I trust I have not;

Not mangled justice. May the hand that next

Inherits thee be but as true to thee As mine hath been! O, my dear friend, the King!

O brother!—I may come to martyrdom.

I am martyr in myself already.—Herbert!

*Herbert (re-entering).* My lord, the town is quiet, and the moon

Divides the whole long street with light and shade.

No footfall—no Fitzurse. We have seen her home.

*Becket.* The hog hath tumbled himself into some corner,

Some ditch, to snore away his drunkenness

Into the sober headache,—Nature's moral Against excess. Let the Great Seal be sent Back to the King to-morrow.

*Herbert.* Must that be? The King may rend the bearer limb from limb.

Think on it again.

*Becket.* Against the moral excess No physical ache, but failure it may be Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury Hath often laid a cold hand on my heats, And Herbert hath rebuked me even now. I will be wise and wary, not the soldier As Foliot swears it.—John, and out of breath!

*Enter JOHN OF SALISBURY*

*John of Salisbury.* Thomas, thou wast not happy taking charge Of this wild Rosamund to please the King, Nor am I happy having charge of her— The included Danae has escaped again Her tower, and her Acrisius—where to seek?

I have been about the city.

*Becket.* Thou wilt find her Back in her lodging. Go with her—at once—

To-night—my men will guard you to the gates.

Be sweet to her, she has many enemies. Send the Great Seal by daybreak. Both, good night!

## SCENE II

*Street in Northampton leading to the Castle*

ELEANOR'S RETAINERS and BECKET'S RETAINERS fighting. *Enter ELEANOR and BECKET from opposite streets.*

*Eleanor.* Peace, fools!

*Becket.* Peace, friends! what idle brawl is this?

*Retainer of Becket.* They said—her Grace's people—thou wast found—

**Liars!** I shame to quote 'em—caught, my lord,

With a wanton in thy lodging—Hell requite 'em!

*Retainer of Eleanor.* My liege, the Lord Fitzurse reported this

In passing to the Castle even now.

*Retainer of Becket.* And then they mock'd us and we fell upon 'em,

For we would live and die for thee, my lord,

However kings and queens may frown on thee.

*Becket to his Retainers.* Go, go—no more of this!

*Eleanor to her Retainers.* Away!—  
(*Exeunt RETAINERS*) Fitzurse—

*Becket.* Nay, let him be.

*Eleanor.* No, no, my Lord Archbishop,

'Tis known you are midwinter to all women,

But often in your chancellorship you served  
The follies of the King.

*Becket.* No, not these follies!

*Eleanor.* My lord, Fitzurse beheld her in your lodging.

*Becket.* Whom?

*Eleanor.* Well—you know—the minion, Rosamund.

*Becket.* He had good eyes!

*Eleanor.* Then hidden in the street  
He watch'd her pass with John of Salisbury  
And heard her cry 'Where is this bower of mine?'

*Becket.* Good ears too!

*Eleanor.* You are going to the Castle,  
Will you subscribe the customs?

*Becket.* I leave that,  
Knowing how much you reverence Holy Church,

My liege, to your conjecture.

*Eleanor.* I and mine—  
And many a baron holds along with me—  
Are not so much at feud with Holy Church  
But we might take your side against the customs—

So that you grant me one slight favour.

*Becket.* What?

*Eleanor.* A sight of that same chart which  
Henry gave you

With the red line—'her bower.'

*Becket.* And to that end?

*Eleanor.* That Church must scorn herself  
whose fearful Priest

Sits winking at the license of a king,  
Altho' we grant when kings are dangerous  
The Church must play into the hands of  
kings;

Look! I would move this wanton from his  
sight

And take the Church's danger on myself.

*Becket.* For which she should be duly  
grateful.

*Eleanor.* True!

Tho' she that binds the bond, herself  
should see

That kings are faithful to their marriage  
vow.

*Becket.* Ay, Madam, and queens also.

*Eleanor.* And queens also!

What is your drift?

*Becket.* My drift is to the Castle,  
Where I shall meet the Barons and my  
King. [*Exit.*]

DE BROU, DE TRACY, DE BRITO,  
DE MORVILLE (*passing*)

*Eleanor.* To the Castle?

*De Broc.* Ay!

*Eleanor.* Stir up the King, the Lords!

Set all on fire against him!

*De Brito.* Ay, good Madam!  
[*Exeunt.*]

*Eleanor.* Fool! I will make thee hateful  
to thy King.

Churl! I will have thee frighted into  
France,

And I shall live to trample on thy grave.

### SCENE III

*The Hall in Northampton Castle*

*On one side of the stage the doors of an inner  
Council-chamber, half-open. At the bot-  
tom, the great doors of the Hall. ROGER  
ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, FOLIOT BISHOP OF  
LONDON, HILARY OF CHICHESTER, BISHOP  
OF HEREFORD, RICHARD DE HASTINGS  
(Grand Prior of Templars), PHILIP DE  
ELEEMOSYNA (the Pope's Almoner), and  
others. DE BROU, FITZURSE, DE BRITO, DE*

MORVILLE, DE TRACY, and other BARONS assembled—a table before them. JOHN OF OXFORD, President of the Council.

*Enter* BECKET and HERBERT OF BOSHAM

*Becket.* Where is the King?

*Roger of York.* Gone hawking on the Nene,

His heart so gall'd with thine ingratitude  
He will not see thy face till thou hast sign'd

These ancient laws and customs of the realm.

Thy sending back the Great Seal madden'd him,

He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes away.  
Take heed, lest he destroy thee utterly.

*Becket.* Then shalt thou step into my place and sign.

*Roger of York.* Didst thou not promise Henry to obey

These ancient laws and customs of the realm?

*Becket.* Saving the honour of my order—ay.

Customs, traditions,—clouds that come and go;

The customs of the Church are Peter's rock.

*Roger of York.* Saving thine order! But King Henry sware

That, saving his King's kingship, he would grant thee

The crown itself. Saving thine order, Thomas,

Is black and white at once, and comes to nought.

O bolster'd up with stubbornness and pride,

Wilt thou destroy the Church in fighting for it,

And bring us all to shame?

*Becket.* Roger of York, When I and thou were youths in Theobald's house,

Twice did thy malice and thy calumnies Exile me from the face of Theobald.

Now I am Canterbury and thou art York.

*Roger of York.* And is not York the peer of Canterbury?

Did not Great Gregory bid St. Austin here

Found two archbishopricks, London and York?

*Becket.* What came of that? The first archbishop fled,

And York lay barren for a hundred years. Why, by this rule, Foliot may claim the pall

For London too.

*Foliot.* And with good reason too, For London had a temple and a priest

When Canterbury hardly bore a name.

*Becket.* The pagan temple of a pagan Rome!

The heathen priesthood of a heathen creed! Thou goest beyond thyself in petulance!

Who made thee London? Who, but Canterbury?

*John of Oxford.* Peace, peace, my lords! these customs are no longer

As Canterbury calls them, wandering clouds,

But by the King's command are written down,

And by the King's command I, John of Oxford,

The President of this Council, read them.

*Becket.* Read! *John of Oxford (reads).* 'All causes of advowsons and presentations, whether between laymen or clerics, shall be tried in the King's court.'

*Becket.* But that I cannot sign: for that would drag

The cleric before the civil judgment-seat, And on a matter wholly spiritual.

*John of Oxford.* 'If any cleric be accused of felony, the Church shall not protect him; but he shall answer to the summons of the King's court to be tried therein.'

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign.

Is not the Church the visible Lord on earth?

Shall hands that do create the Lord be bound

Behind the back like laymen-criminals?

The Lord be judged again by Pilate? No!

*John of Oxford.* 'When a bishoprick falls vacant, the King, till another be appointed, shall receive the revenues thereof.'

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign. Is the King's treasury



A fit place for the monies of the Church,  
That be the patrimony of the poor?

*John of Oxford.* 'And when the vacancy is to be filled up, the King shall summon the chapter of that church to court, and the election shall be made in the Chapel Royal, with the consent of our lord the King, and by the advice of his Government.'

*Becket.* And that I cannot sign: for that would make  
Our island-Church a schism from Christendom,  
And weight down all free choice beneath the throne.

*Foliot.* And was thine own election so canonical,  
Good father?

*Becket.* If it were not, Gilbert Foliot, I mean to cross the sea to France, and lay My crozier in the Holy Father's hands, And bid him re-create me, Gilbert Foliot.

*Foliot.* Nay; by another of these customs thou  
Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the seas  
Without the license of our lord the King.

*Becket.* That, too, I cannot sign.

DE BROC, DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZURSE,  
DE MORVILLE, *start up—a clash of swords.*

*Sign and obey!*  
*Becket.* My lords, is this a combat or a council?

Are ye my masters, or my lord the King?  
Ye make this clashing for no love o' the customs

Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call them,  
But that there be among you those that hold

Lands reft from Canterbury.

*De Broc.* And mean to keep them,  
In spite of thee!

*Lords (shouting).* Sign, and obey the crown!

*Becket.* The crown? Shall I do less for Canterbury

Than Henry for the crown? King Stephen gave

Many of the crown lands to those that helpt him;

So did Matilda, the King's mother. Mark,  
When Henry came into his own again,

Then he took back not only Stephen's gifts,  
But his own mother's, lest the crown should be

Shorn of ancestral splendour. This did Henry.

Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury?  
And thou, De Broc, that holdest Saltwood Castle—

*De Broc.* And mean to hold it, or—

*Becket.* To have my life.

*De Broc.* The King is quick to anger; if thou anger him,  
We wait but the King's word to strike thee dead.

*Becket.* Strike, and I die the death of martyrdom;  
Strike, and ye set these customs by my death

Ringing their own death-knell thro' all the realm.

*Herbert.* And I can tell you, lords, ye are all as like

To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart  
As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.

*John of Oxford.* Ay, sheathe your swords,  
ye will displease the King.

*De Broc.* Why down then thou! but an he come to Saltwood,  
By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf! [*Sheathing his sword.*]

*Hilary.* O my good lord, I do entreat thee—sign.

Save the King's honour here before his barons.

He hath sworn that thou shouldst sign, and now but shuns

The semblance of defeat; I have heard him say

He means no more; so if thou sign, my lord,

That were but as the shadow of an assent.  
*Becket.* 'Twould seem too like the substance, if I sign'd.

*Philip de Eleemosyna.* My lord, thine ear! I have the ear of the Pope.

As thou hast honour for the Pope our master,

Have pity on him, sorely prest upon  
By the fierce Emperor and his Antipope.

Thou knowest he was forced to fly to France;

He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify  
Thy King; for if thou go against thy King,  
Then must he likewise go against thy King,  
And then thy King might join the Anti-  
pope,  
And that would shake the Papacy as it  
stands.

Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals  
He meant no harm nor damage to the  
Church.

Smoothe thou his pride—thy signing is  
but form;

Nay, and should harm come of it, it is the  
Pope

Will be to blame—not thou. Over and  
over

He told me thou shouldst pacify the King,  
Lest there be battle between Heaven and  
Earth,

And Earth should get the better—for the  
time.

Cannot the Pope absolve thee if thou sign?  
*Becket.* Have I the orders of the Holy  
Father?

*Philip de Eleemosyna.* Orders, my lord—  
why, no; for what am I?

The secret whisper of the Holy Father.  
Thou, that hast been a statesman, couldst  
thou always

Blurt thy free mind to the air?

*Becket.* If Rome be feeble, then should  
I be firm.

*Philip.* Take it not that way—balk not  
the Pope's will.

When he hath shaken off the Emperor,  
He heads the Church against the King  
with thee.

*Richard de Hastings (kneeling).* Becket,  
I am the oldest of the Templars;

I knew thy father; he would be mine age  
Had he lived now; think of me as thy  
father!

Behold thy father kneeling to thee, Becket.  
Submit; I promise thee on my salvation  
That thou wilt hear no more o' the  
customs.

*Becket.* What!  
Hath Henry told thee? hast thou talk'd  
with him?

*Another Templar (kneeling).* Father, I  
am the youngest of the Templars,

Look on me as I were thy bodily son,  
For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.

*Philip.* Wilt thou hold out for ever,  
Thomas Becket?

Dost thou not hear?

*Becket (signs).* Why—there then—there  
—I sign,

And swear to obey the customs.

*Foliot.* Is it thy will,  
My lord Archbishop, that we too should  
sign?

*Becket.* O ay, by that canonical obedience  
Thou still hast owed thy father, Gilbert  
Foliot.

*Foliot.* Loyally and with good faith, my  
lord Archbishop?

*Becket.* O ay, with all that loyalty and  
good faith

Thou still hast shown thy primate, Gilbert  
Foliot.

[*BECKET draws apart with HERBERT.*

Herbert, Herbert, have I betray'd the  
Church?

I'll have the paper back—blot out my  
name.

*Herbert.* Too late, my lord: you see they  
are signing there.

*Becket.* False to myself—it is the will of  
God

To break me, prove me nothing of myself!  
This Almoner hath tasted Henry's gold.  
The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold.  
And Rome is venal ev'n to rottenness.

I see it, I see it.

I am no soldier, as he said—at least  
No leader. Herbert, till I hear from the  
Pope

I will suspend myself from all my functions.  
If fast and prayer, the lacerating  
scourge—

*Foliot (from the table).* My lord Arch-  
bishop, thou hast yet to seal.

*Becket.* First, Foliot, let me see what I  
have sign'd. [*Goes to the table.*

What, this! and this!—what! new and old  
together!

Seal? If a seraph shouted from the sun,  
And bad me seal against the rights of the  
Church,

I would anathematise him. I will not seal.  
[*Exit with HERBERT.*

*Enter KING HENRY*

*Henry.* Where's Thomas? hath he  
sign'd? show me the papers!  
Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?

*John of Oxford.* He would not seal.  
And when he sign'd, his face was stormy-  
red—

Shame, wrath, I know not what. He sat  
down there  
And dropt it in his hands, and then a  
paleness,

Like the wan twilight after sunset, crept  
Up even to the tonsure, and he groan'd,  
'False to myself! It is the will of God!'

*Henry.* God's will be what it will, the  
man shall seal,  
Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's  
son—

Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,  
I'll crush him as the subject. Send for him  
back. *[Sits on his throne.]*

Barons and bishops of our realm of Eng-  
land,

After the nineteen winters of King  
Stephen—

A reign which was no reign, when none  
could sit

By his own hearth in peace; when murder  
common

As nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had  
fill'd

All things with blood; when every door-  
way blush'd,

Dash'd red with that unhallow'd passover;  
When every baron ground his blade in  
blood;

The household dough was kneaded up  
with blood;

The millwheel turn'd in blood; the whole-  
some plow

Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds,  
Till famine dwarf'd the race—I came, your  
King!

Nor dwelt alone, like a soft lord of the  
East,

In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools'  
ears

The flatteries of corruption—went abroad  
Thro' all my counties, spied my people's  
ways;

Yea, heard the churl against the baron—  
yea,

And did him justice; sat in mine own  
courts

Judging my judges, that had found a King  
Who rang'd confusions, made the twilight  
day,

And struck a shape from out the vague,  
and law

From madness. And the event—our  
fallows till'd,

Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm again.  
So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,  
Had prosper'd in the main, but suddenly  
Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated

The daughter of his host, and murder'd  
him.

Bishops—York, London, Chichester,  
Westminster—

Ye haled this tonsured devil into your  
courts;

But since your canon will not let you take  
Life for a life, ye but degraded him

Where I had hang'd him. What doth hard  
murder care

For degradation? and that made me muse,  
Being bounden by my coronation oath

To do men justice. Look to it, your own  
selves!

Say that a cleric murder'd an archbishop,  
What could ye do? Degrade, imprison  
him—

Not death for death.

*John of Oxford.* But I, my liege, could  
swear,

To death for death.

*Henry.* And, looking thro' my reign,  
I found a hundred ghastly murders done  
By men, the scum and offal of the Church;  
Then, glancing thro' the story of this  
realm,

I came on certain wholesome usages,  
Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's day,  
Good royal customs—had them written  
fair

For John of Oxford here to read to you.

*John of Oxford.* And I can easily swear  
to these as being

The King's will and God's will and justice;  
yet

I could but read a part to-day, because—

*Fitzurse.* Because my lord of Canterbury—

*De Tracy.* Ay,  
This lord of Canterbury—

*De Brito.* As is his wont  
Too much of late whene'er your royal rights

Are mooted in our councils—  
*Fitzurse.* —made an uproar.

*Henry.* And Becket had my bosom on all this;

If ever man by bonds of gratefulness—  
I raised him from the puddle of the gutter,  
I made him porcelain from the clay of the city—

Thought that I knew him, err'd thro' love of him,

Hoped, were he chosen archbishop, Church and Crown,

Two sisters gliding in an equal dance,  
Two rivers gently flowing side by side—  
But no!

The bird that moults sings the same song again,

The snake that sloughs comes out a snake again.

Snake—ay, but he that lookt a fangless one,

Issues a venomous adder.  
For he, when having doff'd the Chancellor's robe—

Flung the Great Seal of England in my face—

Claim'd some of our crown lands for Canterbury—

My comrade, boon companion, my co-reveller,

The master of his master, the King's king.—

God's eyes! I had meant to make him all but king.

Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well have sway'd

All England under Henry, the young King,  
When I was hence. What did the traitor say?

False to himself, but ten-fold false to me!  
The will of God—why, then it is my will—

Is he coming?

*Messenger (entering).* With a crowd of worshippers,

And holds his cross before him thro' the crowd,

As one that puts himself in sanctuary.  
*Henry.* His cross!

*Roger of York.* His cross! I'll front him, cross to cross.

[*Exit* ROGER OF YORK.  
*Henry.* His cross! it is the traitor that imputes

Treachery to his King!  
It is not safe for me to look upon him.

Away—with me!

[*Goes in with his BARONS to the Council-Chamber, the door of which is left open.*

*Enter* BECKET, holding his cross of silver before him. The BISHOPS come round him.

*Hereford.* The King will not abide thee with thy cross.

Permit me, my good lord, to bear it for thee,

Being thy chaplain.  
*Becket.* No: it must protect me.

*Herbert.* As once he bore the standard of the Angles,

So now he bears the standard of the angels.  
*Fohot.* I am the Dean of the province:

let me bear it.  
Make not thy King a traitorous murderer.

*Becket.* Did not your barons draw their swords against me?

*Enter* ROGER OF YORK, with his cross, advancing to BECKET

*Becket.* Wherefore dost thou presume to bear thy cross,

Against the solemn ordinance from Rome, Out of thy province?

*Roger of York.* Why dost thou presume, Arm'd with thy cross, to come before the King?

If Canterbury brings his cross to court, Let York bear his to mate with Canterbury.

*Foliot (seizing hold of BECKET'S cross).* Nay, nay, my lord, thou must not brave the King.

Nay, let me have it. I will have it!

*Becket.* Away!

[*Flinging him off.*

*Foliot.* He fasts, they say, this mitred Hercules!

*He* fast! is that an arm of fast? My lord, Hadst thou not sign'd, I had gone along with thee;

But thou the shepherd hast betray'd the sheep,

And thou art perjured, and thou wilt not seal.

As Chancellor thou wast against the Church,

Now as Archbishop goest against the King; For, like a fool, thou knowst no middle way.

Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the King?

*Becket.* Strong—not in mine own self, but Heaven; true

To either function, holding it; and thou Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy flesh, Not spirit—thou remainest Gilbert Foliot, A worldly follower of the worldly strong. I, bearing this great ensign, make it clear Under what Prince I fight.

*Foliot.* My lord of York, Let us go in to the Council, where our bishops

And our great lords will sit in judgment on him.

*Becket.* Sons sit in judgment on their father!—then

The spire of Holy Church may prick the graves—

Her crypt among the stars. Sign? seal? I promised

The King to obey these customs, not yet written,

Saving mine order; true too, that when written

I sign'd them—being a fool, as *Foliot* call'd me.

I hold not by my signing. Get ye hence, Tell what I say to the King.

[*Exeunt* HERFORD, FOLIOT, and other BISHOPS.

*Roger of York.* The Church will hate thee. [*Exit.*

*Becket.* Serve my best friend and make him my worst foe;

Fight for the Church, and set the Church against me!

*Herbert.* To be honest is to set all knaves against thee.

Ah! Thomas, excommunicate them all!

*Hereford (re-entering).* I cannot brook the turmoil thou hast raised.

I would, my lord Thomas of Canterbury, Thou wert plain Thomas and not Canterbury,

Or that thou wouldst deliver Canterbury To our King's hands again, and be at peace.

*Hilary (re-entering).* For hath not thine ambition set the Church

This day between the hammer and the anvil—

Faith to the King, obedience to thyself?

*Herbert.* What say the bishops?

*Hilary.* Some have pleaded for him,

But the King rages—most are with the King;

And some are reeds, that one time sway to the current,

And to the wind another. But we hold Thou art forsworn; and no forsworn Archbishop

Shall helm the Church. We therefore place ourselves

Under the shield and safeguard of the Pope,

And cite thee to appear before the Pope, And answer thine accusers. . . . Art thou deaf?

*Becket.* I hear you. [*Clash of arms.*

*Hilary.* Dost thou hear those others?

*Becket.* Ay!

*Roger of York (re-entering).* The King's 'God's eyes!' come now so thick and fast,

We fear that he may reave thee of thine own.

Come on, come on! it is not fit for us

To see the proud Archbishop mutilated.

Say that he blind thee and tear out thy tongue.

*Becket.* So be it. He begins at top with me:

They crucified St. Peter downward.

*Roger of York.* Nay,

But for their sake who stagger betwixt thine

Appeal, and Henry's anger, yield.

## SCENE III

## BECKET

*Becket.*

Hence, Satan!

[*Exit* ROGER OF YORK.]

*Fitzurse (re-entering).* My lord, the King demands three hundred marks, Due from his castles of Berkhamstead and Eye When thou thereof wast warden.

*Becket.* Tell the King I spent thrice that in fortifying his castles.

*De Tracy (re-entering).* My lord, the King demands seven hundred marks, Lent at the siege of Thoulouse by the King.

*Becket.* I led seven hundred knights and fought his wars.

*De Brito (re-entering).* My lord, the King demands five hundred marks, Advanced thee at his instance by the Jews, For which the King was bound security.

*Becket.* I thought it was a gift; I thought it was a gift.

*Enter* LORD LEICESTER (*followed by*  
BARONS and BISHOPS)

*Leicester.* My lord, I come unwillingly. The King Demands a strict account of all those revenues

From all the vacant sees and abbacies, Which came into thy hands when Chancellor.

*Becket.* How much might that amount to, my lord Leicester?

*Leicester.* Some thirty—forty thousand silver marks.

*Becket.* Are these your customs? O my good lord Leicester,

The King and I were brothers. All I had I lavish'd for the glory of the King; I shone from him, for him, his glory, his Reflection: now the glory of the Church Hath swallow'd up the glory of the King; I am his no more, but hers. Grant me one day

To ponder these demands.

*Leicester.* Hear first thy sentence! The King and all his lords—

*Becket.* Son, first hear me!

*Leicester.* Nay, nay, canst thou, that holdest thine estates

In fee and barony of the King, decline The judgment of the King?

*Becket.* The King! I hold

Nothing in fee and barony of the King. Whatever the Church owns—she holds it in

Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to One earthly sceptre.

*Leicester.* Nay, but hear thy judgment. The King and all his barons—

*Becket.* Judgment! Barons! Who but the bridegroom dares to judge the bride.

Or he the bridegroom may appoint? Not he

That is not of the house, but from the street

Stain'd with the mire thereof.

I had been so true To Henry and mine office that the King Would throne me in the great Archbishoprick:

And I, that knew mine own infirmity, For the King's pleasure rather than God's cause

Took it upon me—err'd thro' love of him. Now therefore God from me withdraws Himself,

And the King too.

What! forty thousand marks! Why thou, the King, the Pope, the Saints, the world,

Know that when made Archbishop I was freed,

Before the Prince and chief Justiciary, From every bond and debt and obligation Incurr'd as Chancellor.

Hear me, son.

As gold Outvalues dross, light darkness, Abel Cain, The soul the body, and the Church the Throne,

I charge thee, upon pain of mine anathema, That thou obey, not me, but God in me, Rather than Henry. I refuse to stand By the King's censure, make my cry to the Pope,

By whom I will be judged; refer myself, The King, these customs, all the Church, to him,

And under his authority—I depart.

[*Going.*

[LEICESTER looks at him doubtfully. Am I a prisoner?

*Leicester.* By St. Lazarus, no!  
I am confounded by thee. Go in peace.

*De Broc.* In peace now—but after. Take that for earnest.

[*Flings a bone at him from the rushes.*]

*De Brito, Fitzurse, De Tracy, and others*  
(*flinging wisps of rushes*). Ay, go in peace, caitiff, caitiff! And that too, perjured prelate—and that, turncoat shaveling! There, there! there! traitor, traitor, traitor!

*Becket.* Mannerless wolves!

[*Turning and facing them.*]

*Herbert.* Enough, my lord, enough!

*Becket.* Barons of England and of North-  
mandy,

When what ye shake at doth but seem to fly,

True test of coward, ye follow with a yell.  
But I that threw the mightiest knight of France,

Sir Engelram de Trie,—

*Herbert.* Enough, my lord.

*Becket.* More than enough. I play the fool again.

*Enter HERALD*

*Herald.* The King commands you, upon pain of death,  
That none should wrong or injure your Archbishop.

*Foliot.* Deal gently with the young man Absalom.

[*Great doors of the Hall at the back open, and discover a crowd. They shout:*]

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

#### SCENE IV

*Refectory of the Monastery at Northampton.  
A banquet on the Tables*

*Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAINERS*

*1st Retainer.* Do thou speak first.

*2nd Retainer.* Nay, thou! Nay, thou!  
Hast not thou drawn the short straw?

*1st Retainer.* My lord Archbishop, wilt thou permit us—

*Becket.* To speak without stammering and like a free man? Ay.

*1st Retainer.* My lord, permit us then to leave thy service.

*Becket.* When?

*1st Retainer.* Now.

*Becket.* To-night?

*1st Retainer.* To-night, my lord.

*Becket.* And why?

*1st Retainer.* My lord, we leave thee not without tears.

*Becket.* Tears? Why not stay with me then?

*1st Retainer.* My lord, we cannot yield thee an answer altogether to thy satisfaction.

*Becket.* I warrant you, or your own either. Shall I find you one? The King hath frowned upon me.

*1st Retainer.* That is not altogether our answer, my lord.

*Becket.* No; yet all but all. Go, go! Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years.

*1st Retainer.* And so we have. We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou not say, 'God bless you,' ere we go?

*Becket.* God bless you all! God reddens your pale blood! But mine is human-red; and when ye shall hear it is poured out upon earth, and see it mounting to Heaven, my God bless you, that seems sweet to you now, will blast and blind you like a curse.

*1st Retainer.* We hope not, my lord. Our humblest thanks for your blessing. Farewell!

[*Exeunt RETAINERS.*]  
*Becket.* Farewell, friends! farewell, swallows! I wrong the bird; she leaves only the nest she built, they leave the builder. Why? Am I to be murdered to-night?

[*Knocking at the door.*]

*Attendant.* Here is a missive left at the gate by one from the castle.

*Becket.* Cornwall's hand or Leicester's: they write marvellously alike. [*Reading.*]

'Fly at once to France, to King Louis of France: there be those about our King who would have thy blood.'

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden to to our supper?

*Attendant.* Ay, my lord, and divers other earls and barons. But the hour is past, and

our brother, Master Cook, he makes moan that all be a-getting cold.

*Becket.* And I make my moan along with him. Cold after warm, winter after summer, and the golden leaves, these earls and barons, that clung to me, frosted off me by the first cold frown of the King. Cold, but look how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem. Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast.

*Herbert.* That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

*Becket.* And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church is ever at variance with the kings, and ever at one with the poor. I marked a group of lazars in the marketplace—half-rag, half-sore—beggars, poor rogues (Heaven bless 'em) who never saw nor dreamed of such a banquet. I will amaze them. Call them in, I say. They shall henceforward be my earls and barons—our lords and masters in Christ Jesus.

[*Exit HERBERT.*]

If the King hold his purpose, I am myself a beggar. Forty thousand marks! forty thousand devils—and these craven bishops!

*A POOR MAN (entering) with his dog*

My lord Archbishop, may I come in with my poor friend, my dog? The King's verdurer caught him a-hunting in the forest, and cut off his paws. The dog followed his calling, my lord. I ha' carried him ever so many miles in my arms, and he licks my face and moans and cries out against the King.

*Becket.* Better thy dog than thee. The King's courts would use thee worse than thy dog—they are too bloody. Were the Church king, it would be otherwise. Poor beast! set him down. I will bind up his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! Who misuses a dog would misuse a child—they cannot speak for themselves. Past help! his paws are past help. God help him!

*Enter the BEGGARS (and seat themselves at the Tables). BECKET and HERBERT wait upon them.*

*1st Beggar.* Swine, sheep, ox—here's a French supper. When thieves fall out, honest men—

*2nd Beggar.* Is the Archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper?

*1st Beggar.* Well, then, how does it go? When honest men fall out, thieves—no, it can't be that.

*2nd Beggar.* Who stole the widow's one sitting hen o' Sunday, when she was at mass?

*1st Beggar.* Come, come! thou hadst thy share on her. Sitting hen! Our Lord Becket's our great sitting-hen cock, and we shouldn't ha' been sitting here if the barons and bishops hadn't been a-sitting on the Archbishop.

*Becket.* Ay, the princes sat in judgment against me, and the Lord hath prepared your table—*Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

*A Voice.* Becket, beware of the knife!

*Becket.* Who spoke?

*3rd Beggar.* Nobody, my lord. What's that, my lord?

*Becket.* Venison.

*3rd Beggar.* Venison?

*Becket.* Buck; deer, as you call it.

*3rd Beggar.* King's meat! By the Lord, won't we pray for your lordship!

*Becket.* And, my children, your prayers will do more for me in the day of peril than dawns darkly and drearily over the house of God—yea, and in the day of judgment also, than the swords of the craven sycophants would have done had they remained true to me whose bread they have partaken. I must leave you to your banquet. Feed, feast, and be merry. Herbert, for the sake of the Church itself, if not for my own, I must fly to France to-night. Come with me.

[*Exit with HERBERT.*]

*3rd Beggar.* Here—all of you—my lord's health (*they drink*). Well—if that isn't goodly wine—

*1st Beggar.* Then there isn't a goodly wench to serve him with it: they were fighting for her to-day in the street.



3rd Beggar. Peace!

1st Beggar. The black sheep baed to the miller's ewe-lamb,

The miller's away for to-night.

Black sheep, quoth she, too black a sin for me.

And what said the black sheep, my masters?

We can make a black sin white.

3rd Beggar. Peace!

1st Beggar. 'Ewe lamb, ewe lamb, I am here by the dam.'

But the miller came home that night, And so dusted his back with the meal in his sack,

That he made the black sheep white.

3rd Beggar. Be we not of the family? be we not a-supping with the head of the family? be we not in my lord's own refractory? Out from among us; thou art our black sheep.

*Enter the four KNIGHTS*

Fitzurse. Sheep, said he? And sheep without the shepherd, too. Where is my lord Archbishop? Thou the lustiest and lousiest of this Cain's brotherhood, answer.

3rd Beggar. With Cain's answer, my lord. Am I his keeper? Thou shouldst call him Cain, not me.

Fitzurse. So I do, for he would murder his brother the State.

3rd Beggar (*rising and advancing*). No, my lord; but because the Lord hath set his mark upon him that no man should murder him.

Fitzurse. Where is he? where is he?

3rd Beggar. With Cain belike, in the land of Nod, or in the land of France for aught I know.

Fitzurse. France! Ha! De Morville, Tracy, Brito—fled is he? Cross swords all of you! swear to follow him! Remember the Queen!

[*The four KNIGHTS cross their swords.*]

De Brito. They mock us; he is here.

[*All the BEGGARS rise and advance upon them.*]

Fitzurse. Come, you filthy knaves, let us pass.

3rd Beggar. Nay, my lord, let us pass.

We be a-going home after our supper in all humbleness, my lord; for the Archbishop loves humbleness, my lord; and though we be fifty to four, we daren't fight you with our crutches, my lord. There now, if thou hast not laid hands upon me! and my fellows know that I am all one scale like a fish. I pray God I haven't given thee my leprosy, my lord.

[*FITZURSE shrinks from him and another presses upon DE BRITO.*]

De Brito. Away, dog!

4th Beggar. And I was bit by a mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog already by this token, that tho' I can drink wine I cannot bide water, my lord; and I want to bite, I want to bite, and they do say the very breath catches.

De Brito. Insolent clown. Shall I smite him with the edge of the sword?

De Morville. No, nor with the flat of it either. Smite the shepherd and the sheep are scattered. Smite the sheep and the shepherd will excommunicate thee.

De Brito. Yet my fingers itch to beat him into nothing.

5th Beggar. So do mine, my lord. I was born with it, and sulphur won't bring it out o' me. But for all that the Archbishop washed my feet o' Tuesday. He likes it, my lord.

6th Beggar. And see here, my lord, this rag fro' the gangrene i' my leg. It's humbling—it smells o' human natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my lord? for the Archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord.

De Morville. Faugh! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go.

[*They draw back, BEGGARS following.*]

7th Beggar. My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating sickness. They be dead while I be a-supping.

8th Beggar. And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be dead ten times o'er i' one day wi' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it along wi' me, for the Archbishop likes it, my lord.

[*Pressing upon the KNIGHTS till they disappear thro' the door.*]

3rd Beggar. Crutches, and itches, and

leprosy, and ulcers, and gangrenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our Archbishop!

1st Beggar. I'll go back again. I hain't half done yet.

*Herbert of Bosham (entering).* My friends, the Archbishop bids you goodnight. He hath tired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars, from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness.

3rd Beggar. So we will—so we will, I warrant thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! Vive le Roy! That's the English of it.

## ACT II

## SCENE I

*Rosamund's Bower*

*A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild-flowers with a bench before it*

*Voices heard singing among the trees*

*Duet*

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.
1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep from the strand, One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.
1. Love that can shape or can shatter a life till the life shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life from the dead.
1. Keep him away from the lone little isle. Let us be, let us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it—he, it is he, Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.

*Enter HENRY and ROSAMUND*

*Rosamund.* Be friends with him again—I do beseech thee.

*Henry.* With Becket? I have but one hour with thee—

Sceptre and crozier clashing, and the mitre Grappling the crown—and when I flee from this

For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-while To rest upon thy bosom and forget him—

Why thou, my bird, thou pipest Becket, Becket—

Yea, thou my golden dream of Love's own bower,

Must be the nightmare breaking on my peace

With 'Becket.'

*Rosamund.* O my life's life, not to smile Is all but death to me. My sun, no cloud! Let there not be one frown in this one hour.

Out of the many thine, let this be mine! Look rather thou all-royal as when first I met thee.

*Henry.* Where was that?

*Rosamund.* Forgetting that Forgets me too.

*Henry.* Nay, I remember it well. There on the moors.

*Rosamund.* And in a narrow path. A plover flew before thee. Then I saw Thy high black steed among the flaming furze, Like sudden night in the main glare of day. And from that height something was said to me

I knew not what.

*Henry.* I ask'd the way.

*Rosamund.* I think so. So I lost mine.

*Henry.* Thou wast too shamed to answer.

*Rosamund.* Too scared—so young!

*Henry.* The rosebud of my rose!—Well, well, no more of him—I have sent his folk,

His kin, all his belongings, overseas;

Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers—all

By hundreds to him—there to beg, starve, die—

So that the fool King Louis feed them not.  
The man shall feel that I can strike him yet.

*Rosamund.* Babes, orphans, mothers! is that royal, Sire?

*Henry.* And I have been as royal with the Church.

He shelter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny.  
There wore his time studying the canon law

To work it against me. But since he cursed  
My friends at Veselay, I have let them know,

That if they keep him longer as their guest,  
I scatter all their crows to all the hells.

*Rosamund.* And is that altogether royal?

*Henry.* Traitor!

*Rosamund.* A faithful traitress to thy royal fame.

*Henry.* Fame! what care I for fame?  
Spite, ignorance, envy,

Yea, honesty too, paint her what way they will.

Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;  
Infamy of to-day is fame to-morrow;  
And round and round again. What matters? Royal—

I mean to leave the royalty of my crown  
Unless en'd to mine heirs.

*Rosamund.* Still—thy fame too:  
I say that should be royal.

*Henry.* And I say,  
I care not for thy saying.

*Rosamund.* And I say,  
I care not for *thy* saying. A greater King  
Than thou art, Love, who cares not for the word,

Makes 'care not'—care. There have I spoken true?

*Henry.* Care dwell with me for ever,  
when I cease

To care for thee as ever!

*Rosamund.* No need! no need! . . .  
There is a bench. Come, wilt thou sit?  
. . . My bank

Of wild-flowers [*he sits*]. At thy feet!

[*She sits at his feet.*]

*Henry.* I bid them clear  
A royal pleasure for thee, in the wood,  
Not leave these countryfolk at court.

*Rosamund.* I brought them

In from the wood, and set them here. I love them

More than the garden flowers, that seem at most

Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not half speaking

The language of the land. I love *them* too,  
Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all the roses—

Shame fall on those who gave it a dog's name—

This wild one (*picking a briar-rose*)—nay,  
I shall not prick myself—

Is sweetest. Do but smell!

*Henry.* Thou rose of the world!

Thou rose of all the roses! [*Muttering.*]

I am not worthy of her—this beast-body  
That God has plunged my soul in—I, that taking

The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so long  
Have wander'd among women,—a foul stream

Thro' fever-breeding levels,—at her side,  
Among these happy dales, run clearer, drop

The mud I carried, like yon brook, and glass

The faithful face of heaven—

[*Looking at her, and unconsciously aloud,*  
—thine! thine!

*Rosamund.* I know it.

*Henry (muttering).* Not hers. We have but one bond, her hate of Becket.

*Rosamund (half hearing).* Nay! nay! what art thou muttering? I hate Becket?

*Henry (muttering).* A sane and natural loathing for a soul

Purer, and truer and nobler than herself;  
And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate,  
A bastard hate born of a former love.

*Rosamund.* My fault to name him! O let the hand of one

To whom thy voice is all her music, stay it  
But for a breath.

[*Puts her hand before his lips.*]

Speak only of thy love.

Why there—like some loud beggar at thy gate—

The happy boldness of this hand hath won it

Love's alms, thy kiss (*looking at her hand*)

—Sacred! I'll kiss it too.

[*Kissing it.*]

There! wherefore dost thou so peruse it?

Nay,

There may be crosses in my line of life.

*Henry.* Not half *her* hand—no hand to mate with *her*,

If it should come to that.

*Rosamund.* With *her*? with whom?

*Henry.* Life on the hand is naked gipsy-stuff;

Life on the face, the brows—clear innocence!

Vein'd marble—not a furrow yet—and hers

[*Muttering.*]

Crost and recrost, a venomous spider's web—

*Rosamund* (*springing up*). Out of the cloud, my Sun—out of the eclipse  
Narrowing my golden hour!

*Henry.* O *Rosamund*,  
I would be true—would tell thee all—and something  
I had to say—I love thee none the less—

Which will so vex thee.

*Rosamund.* Something against *me*?

*Henry.* No, no, against myself.

*Rosamund.* I will not hear it.  
Come, come, mine hour! I bargain for  
mine hour.

I'll call thee little *Geoffrey*.

*Henry.* Call him!

*Rosamund.* *Geoffrey*!

*Enter GEOFFREY*

*Henry.* How the boy grows!

*Rosamund.* Ay, and his brows are thine;  
The mouth is only *Clifford*, my dear father.

*Geoffrey.* My liege, what hast thou brought me?

*Henry.* Venal imp!

What say'st thou to the Chancellorship of England?

*Geoffrey.* O yes, my liege.

*Henry.* 'O yes, my liege!' He speaks

As if it were a cake of gingerbread.

Dost thou know, my boy, what it is to be Chancellor of England?

*Geoffrey.* Something good or thou wouldst not give it me.

*Henry.* It is, my boy, to side with the King when Chancellor, and then to be made Archbishop and go against the King who made him, and turn the world upside down.

*Geoffrey.* I won't have it then. Nay, but give it me, and I promise thee not to turn the world upside down.

*Henry* (*giving him a ball*). Here is a ball, my boy, thy world, to turn anyway and play with as thou wilt—which is more than I can do with mine. Go try it, play.

[*Exit GEOFFREY.*]

A pretty lusty boy.

*Rosamund.* So like to thee;

Like to be liker.

*Henry.* Not in my chin, I hope!

That threatens double.

*Rosamund.* Thou art manlike perfect.

*Henry.* Ay, ay, no doubt; and were I humpt behind,  
Thou'dst say as much—the goodly way of women

Who love, for which I love them. May God grant

No ill befall or him or thee when I

Am gone.

*Rosamund.* Is *he* thy enemy?

*Henry.* He? who? ay!

*Rosamund.* Thine enemy knows the secret of my bower.

*Henry.* And I could tear him asunder with wild horses

Before he would betray it. Nay—no fear! More like is he to excommunicate me.

*Rosamund.* And I would creep, crawl over knife-edge flint

Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay his hand Before he flash'd the bolt.

*Henry.* And when he flash'd it Shrink from me, like a daughter of the Church.

*Rosamund.* Ay, but he will not.

*Henry.* Ay! but if he did?

*Rosamund.* O then! O then! I almost fear to say

That my poor heretic heart would excommunicate

His excommunication, clinging to thee Closer than ever.

*Henry (raising ROSAMUND and kissing her).*  
My brave-hearted Rose!  
Hath he ever been to see thee?

*Rosamund.* Here? not he.  
And it is so lonely here—no confessor.

*Henry.* Thou shalt confess all thy sweet sins to me.

*Rosamund.* Besides, we came away in such a heat,  
I brought not ev'n my crucifix.

*Henry.* Take this.  
[*Giving her the Crucifix which ELEANOR gave him.*

*Rosamund.* O beautiful! May I have it as mine, till mine  
Be mine again?

*Henry (throwing it round her neck).*  
Thine—as I am—till death!

*Rosamund.* Death? no! I'll have it with me in my shroud,  
And wake with it, and show it to all the Saints.

*Henry.* Nay—I must go; but when thou layest thy lip  
To this, remembering One who died for thee,

Remember also one who lives for thee  
Out there in France; for I must hence to brave

The Pope, King Louis, and this turbulent priest.

*Rosamund (kneeling).* O by thy love for me, all mine for thee,  
Fling not thy soul into the flames of hell:  
I kneel to thee—be friends with him again.

*Henry.* Look, look! if little Geoffrey have not tost  
His ball into the brook! makes after it too  
To find it. Why, the child will drown himself.

*Rosamund.* Geoffrey! Geoffrey!  
[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II

## Montmirail

'*The Meeting of the Kings.*' JOHN OF OXFORD  
and HENRY. *Crowd in the distance*

*John of Oxford.* You have not crown'd  
young Henry yet, my liege?

*Henry.* Crown'd! by God's eyes, we will not have him crown'd.

I spoke of late to the boy, he answer'd me,

As if he wore the crown already—No,  
We will not have him crown'd.

'Tis true what Becket told me, that the mother  
Would make him play his kingship against mine.

*John of Oxford.* Not have him crown'd?  
*Henry.* Not now—not yet! and Becket—

Becket should crown him were he crown'd at all:

But, since we would be lord of our own manor,

This Canterbury, like a wounded deer,  
Has fled our presence and our feeding-grounds.

*John of Oxford.* Cannot a smooth tongue lick him whole again  
To serve your will?

*Henry.* He hates my will, not me.  
*John of Oxford.* There's York, my liege.

*Henry.* But England scarce would hold  
Young Henry king, if only crown'd by York,

And that would stilt up York to twice himself.

There is a movement yonder in the crowd—

See if our pious—what shall I call him,  
John?—

Husband-in-law, our smooth-shorn suzerain,

Be yet within the field.  
*John of Oxford.* I will. [*Exit.*

*Henry.* Ay! Ay!  
Mince and go back! his politic Holiness

Hath all but climb'd the Roman perch again,

And we shall hear him presently with clapt wing

Crow over Barbarossa—at last tongue-free  
To blast my realms with excommunication

And interdict. I must patch up a peace—  
A piece in this long-tugged-at, threadbare-worn

Quarrel of Crown and Church—to rend again.

His Holiness cannot steer straight thro'  
 shoals,  
 Nor I. The citizen's heir hath conquer'd  
 me  
 For the moment. So we make our peace  
 with him.

*Enter LOUIS*

Brother of France, what shall be done with  
 Becket?

*Louis.* The holy Thomas! Brother, you  
 have traffick'd

Between the Emperor and the Pope,  
 between

The Pope and Antipope—a perilous game  
 For men to play with God.

*Henry.* Ay, ay, good brother,  
 They call you the Monk-King.

*Louis.* Who calls me? she  
 That was my wife, now yours? You have  
 her Duchy,

The point you aim'd at, and pray God she  
 prove

True wife to you. You have had the better  
 of us

In secular matters.

*Henry.* Come, confess, good brother,  
 You did your best or worst to keep her  
 Duchy.

Only the golden Leopard printed in it  
 Such hold-fast claws that you perforce  
 again

Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did we con-  
 vene

This conference but to babble of our  
 wives?

They are plagues enough in-door.

*Louis.* We fought in the East,  
 And felt the sun of Antioch scald our  
 mail,

And push'd our lances into Saracen hearts.  
 We never hounded on the State at home  
 To spoil the Church.

*Henry.* How should you see this rightly?

*Louis.* Well, well, no more! I am proud  
 of my 'Monk-King,'

Whoever named me; and, brother, Holy  
 Church

May rock, but will not wreck, nor our  
 Archbishop

Stagger on the slope decks for any rough sea

Blown by the breath of kings. We do for-  
 give you

For aught you wrought against us.

*[HENRY holds up his hand.]*

Nay, I pray you,  
 Do not defend yourself. You will do much  
 To rake out all old dying heats, if you,  
 At my requesting, will but look into  
 The wrongs you did him, and restore his  
 kin,

Reseat him on his throne of Canterbury,  
 Be, both, the friends you were.

*Henry.* The friends we were!

Co-mates we were, and had our sport  
 together,

Co-kings we were, and made the laws  
 together.

The world had never seen the like before.  
 You are too cold to know the fashion of it.  
 Well, well, we will be gentle with him,  
 gracious—

Most gracious.

*Enter BECKET, after him, JOHN OF OXFORD,  
 ROGER OF YORK, GILBERT FOLIOT, DE  
 BROC, FITZURSE, etc.*

Only that the rift he made  
 May close between us, here I am wholly  
 king,

The word should come from him.

*Becket (kneeling).* Then, my dear liege,  
 I here deliver all this controversy  
 Into your royal hands.

*Henry.* Ah, Thomas, Thomas  
 Thou art thyself again, Thomas again.

*Becket (rising).* Saving God's honour!

*Henry.* Out upon thee, man!  
 Saving the Devil's honour, his yes and no.  
 Knights, bishops, earls, this London  
 spawn—by Mahound,

I had sooner have been born a Mussul-  
 man—

Less clashing with their priests—

I am half-way down the slope—will no  
 man stay me?

I dash myself to pieces—I stay myself—  
 Puff—it is gone. You, Master Becket, you  
 That owe to me your power over me—

Nay, nay—

Brother of France, you have taken,  
 cherish'd him

Who thief-like fled from his own church  
by night,  
No man pursuing. I would have had him  
back.

Take heed he do not turn and rend you  
too:

For whatsoever may displease him—that  
Is clean against God's honour—a shift, a  
trick

Whereby to challenge, face me out of all  
My regal rights. Yet, yet—that none may  
dream

I go against God's honour—ay, or himself  
In any reason, choose

A hundred of the wisest heads from Eng-  
land,

A hundred, too, from Normandy and  
Anjou:

Let these decide on what was customary  
In olden days, and all the Church of  
France

Decide on their decision, I am content.

More, what the mightiest and the holiest  
Of all his predecessors may have done  
Ev'n to the least and meanest of my own,  
Let him do the same to me—I am con-  
tent.

*Lous.* Ay, ay! the King humbles himself  
enough.

*Becket. (Aside.)* Words! he will wriggle  
out of them like an eel

When the time serves. *(Aloud.)* My lieges  
and my lords,

The thanks of Holy Church are due to  
those

That went before us for their work, which  
we

Inheriting reap an easier harvest. Yet——

*Lous.* My lord, will you be greater than  
the Saints,

More than St. Peter? whom——what is it,  
you doubt?

Behold your peace at hand.

*Becket.* I say that those

Who went before us did not wholly clear  
The deadly growths of earth, which Hell's  
own heat

So dwell on that they rose and darken'd  
Heaven.

Yet they did much. Would God they had  
torn up all

By the hard root, which shoots again; our  
trial

Had so been less; but, seeing they were  
men

Defective or excessive, must we follow

All that they overdid or underdid?

Nay, if they were defective as St. Peter  
Denying Christ, who yet defied the tyrant,  
We hold by his defiance, not his defect.

O good son Louis, do not counsel me,  
No, to suppress God's honour for the sake  
Of any king that breathes. No, God forbid!

*Henry.* No! God forbid! and turn me  
Mussulman!

No God but one, and Mahound is his  
prophet.

But for your Christian, look you, you shall  
have

None other God but me—me, Thomas,  
son

Of Gilbert Becket, London merchant. Out!  
I hear no more. *[Exit.]*

*Lous.* Our brother's anger puts him,  
Poor man, beside himself—not wise. My  
lord,

We have claspt your cause, believing that  
our brother

Had wrong'd you; but this day he proffer'd  
peace.

You will have war; and tho' we grant the  
Church

King over this world's kings, yet, my good  
lord,

We that are kings are something in this  
world,

And so we pray you, draw yourself from  
under

The wings of France. We shelter you no  
more. *[Exit.]*

*John of Oxford.* I am glad that France  
hath scouted him at last:

I told the Pope what manner of man he  
was. *[Exit.]*

*Roger of York.* Yea, since he flouts the  
will of either realm,

Let either cast him away like a dead dog!  
*[Exit.]*

*Foliot.* Yea, let a stranger spoil his  
heritage,

And let another take his bishoprick!  
*[Exit.]*

*De Broc.* Our castle, my lord, belongs to Canterbury.

I pray you come and take it. *[Exit.*

*Fitzurse.* When you will. *[Exit.*

*Becket.* Cursed be John of Oxford,  
Roger of York,  
And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De Brocs  
That hold our Saltwood Castle from our  
see!

Cursed Fitzurse, and all the rest of them  
That sow this hate between my lord and  
me!

*Voices from the Crowd.* Blessed be the  
Lord Archbishop, who hath withstood two  
Kings to their faces for the honour of  
God.

*Becket.* Out of the mouths of babes and  
sucklings, praise!

I thank you, sons; when kings but hold by  
crowns,  
The crowd that hungers for a crown in  
Heaven

Is my true king.

*Herbert.* Thy true King bad thee be  
A fisher of men; thou hast them in thy net.

*Becket.* I am too like the King here;  
both of us

Too headlong for our office. Better have  
been

A fisherman at Bosham, my good Herbert,  
Thy birthplace—the sea-creek—the petty  
rill

That falls into it—the green field—the  
gray church—

The simple lobster-basket, and the mesh—  
The more or less of daily labour done—

The pretty gaping bills in the home-nest  
Piping for bread—the daily want sup-  
plied—

The daily pleasure to supply it.

*Herbert.* Ah, Thomas,  
You had not borne it, no, not for a day.

*Becket.* Well, maybe, no,

*Herbert.* But bear with Walter Map,  
For here he comes to comment on the  
time.

*Enter WALTER MAP*

*Walter Map.* Pity, my lord, that you  
have quenched the warmth of France to-  
ward you, tho' His Holiness, after much

smouldering and smoking, be kindled  
again upon your quarter.

*Becket.* Ay, if he do not end in smoke  
again.

*Walter Map.* My lord, the fire, when  
first kindled, said to the smoke, 'Go up,  
my son, straight to Heaven.' And the  
smoke said, 'I go;' but anon the North-  
east took and turned him South-west, then  
the South-west turned him North-east,  
and so of the other winds; but it was in him  
to go up straight if the time had been  
quieter. Your lordship affects the un-  
wavering perpendicular; but His Holiness,  
pushed one way by the Empire and another  
by England, if he move at all, Heaven stay  
him, is fain to diagonalise.

*Herbert.* Diagonalise! thou art a word-  
monger.

Our Thomas never will diagonalise.  
Thou art a jester and a verse-maker.  
Diagonalise!

*Walter Map.* Is the world any the worse  
for my verses if the Latin rhymes be rolled  
out from a full mouth? or any harm done  
to the people if my jest be in defence of the  
Truth?

*Becket.* Ay, if the jest be so done that the  
people

Delight to wallow in the grossness of it,  
Till Truth herself be shamed of her  
defender.

*Non defensoribus istis,* Walter Map.

*Walter Map.* Is that my case? so if the  
city be sick, and I cannot call the kennel  
sweet, your lordship would suspend me  
from verse-writing, as you suspended  
yourself after sub-writing to the customs.

*Becket.* I pray God pardon mine in-  
firmity.

*Walter Map.* Nay, my lord, take heart;  
for tho' you suspended yourself, the Pope  
let you down again; and tho' you suspend  
Foliot or another, the Pope will not leave  
them in suspense, for the Pope himself is  
always in suspense, like Mahound's coffin  
hung between heaven and earth—always  
in suspense, like the scales, till the weight  
of Germany or the gold of England brings  
one of them down to the dust—always in  
suspense, like the tail of the horologe—to



and fro—tick-tack—we make the time, we keep the time, ay, and we serve the time; for I have heard say that if you boxed the Pope's ears with a purse, you might stagger him, but he would pocket the purse. No saying of mine—Jocelyn of Salisbury. But the King hath bought half the College of Redhats. He warmed to you to-day, and you have chilled him again. Yet you both love God. Agree with him quickly again, even for the sake of the Church. My one grain of good counsel which you will not swallow. I hate a split between old friendships as I hate the dirty gap in the face of a Cistercian monk, that will swallow anything. Farewell. *[Exit.]*

*Becket.* Map scoffs at Rome. I all but hold with Map.

Save for myself no Rome were left in England,

All had been his. Why should this Rome, this Rome,

Still choose Barabbas rather than the Christ,

Absolve the left-hand thief and damn the right?

Take fees of tyranny, wink at sacrilege, Which even Peter had not dared? condemn The blameless exile?—

*Herbert.* Thee, thou holy Thomas! I would that thou hadst been the Holy Father.

*Becket.* I would have done my most to keep Rome holy,

I would have made Rome know she still is Rome—

Who stands aghast at her eternal self And shakes at mortal kings—her vacillation, Avarice, craft—O God, how many an innocent

Has left his bones upon the way to Rome Unwept, uncared for. Yea—on mine own self

The King had had no power except for Rome.

'Tis not the King who is guilty of mine exile,

But Rome, Rome, Rome!

*Herbert.* My lord, I see this Louis Returning, ah! to drive thee from his realm.

*Becket.* He said as much before. Thou art no prophet, Nor yet a prophet's son.

*Herbert.* Whatever he say, Deny not thou God's honour for a king. The King looks troubled.

*Re-enter KING LOUIS*

*Louis.* My dear lord Archbishop, I learn but now that those poor Poitevins, That in thy cause were stirr'd against King

Henry, Have been, despite his kingly promise given

To our own self of pardon, evilly used And put to pain. I have lost all trust in him.

The Church alone hath eyes—and now I see

That I was blind—suffer the phrase—surrendering

God's honour to the pleasure of a man. Forgive me and absolve me, holy father.

*[Kneels.]*

*Becket.* Son, I absolve thee in the name of God.

*Louis (rising).* Return to Sens, where we will care for you.

The wine and wealth of all our France are yours;

Rest in our realm, and be at peace with all. *[Exeunt.]*

*Voices from the Crowd.* Long live the good King Louis! God bless the great Archbishop!

*Re-enter HENRY and JOHN OF OXFORD*

*Henry (looking after KING LOUIS and BECKET).* Ay, there they go—both backs are turn'd to me—

Why then I strike into my former path For England, crown young Henry there, and make

Our waning Eleanor all but love me! *John,*

Thou hast served me heretofore with Rome—and well.

They call thee John the Swearer.

*John of Oxford.* For this reason, That, being ever duteous to the King,

I evermore have sworn upon his side, And ever mean to do it.

*Henry (claps him on the shoulder).*  
 Honest John!  
 To Rome again! the storm begins again.  
 Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with our  
 coins,  
 Threaten our junction with the Emperor  
 —flatter  
 And fright the Pope—bribe all the Car-  
 dinals—leave  
 Lateran and Vatican in one dust of gold—  
 Swear and unswear, state and misstate thy  
 best!  
 I go to have young Henry crown'd by  
 York.

## ACT III

## SCENE I

*The Bower*

HENRY and ROSAMUND

*Henry.* All that you say is just. I cannot  
 answer it  
 Till better times, when I shall put  
 away—  
*Rosamund.* What will you put away?  
*Henry.* That which you ask me  
 Till better times. Let it content you now  
 There is no woman that I love so well.  
*Rosamund.* No woman but should be  
 content with that—  
*Henry.* And one fair child to fondle!  
*Rosamund.* O yes, the child  
 We waited for so long—heaven's gift at  
 last—  
 And how you doated on him then! To-day  
 I almost fear'd your kiss was colder—yes—  
 But then the child is such a child. What  
 chance  
 That he should ever spread into the man  
 Here in our silence? I have done my best.  
 I am not learn'd.  
*Henry.* I am the King, his father,  
 And I will look to it. Is our secret ours?  
 Have you had any alarm? no stranger?  
*Rosamund.* No.  
 The warder of the bower hath given him-  
 self  
 Of late to wine. I sometimes think he sleeps  
 When he should watch; and yet what fear?  
 the people

Believe the wood enchanted. No one comes,  
 Nor foe nor friend; his fond excess of wine  
 Springs from the loneliness of my poor  
 bower,

Which weighs even on me.

*Henry.* Yet these tree-towers,  
 Their long bird-echoing minster-aisles,—  
 the voice  
 Of the perpetual brook, these golden  
 slopes  
 Of Solomon-shaming flowers—that was  
 your saying,  
 All pleased you so at first.

*Rosamund.* Not now so much.  
 My Anjou bower was scarce as beautiful.  
 But you were oftener there. I have none  
 but you.

The brook's voice is not yours, and no  
 flower, not

The sun himself, should he be changed to  
 one,

Could shine away the darkness of that gap  
 Left by the lack of love.

*Henry.* The lack of love!

*Rosamund.* Of one we love. Nay, I would  
 not be bold,

Yet hoped ere this you might—

[*Looks earnestly at him.*]

*Henry.* Anything further?

*Rosamund.* Only my best bower-maiden  
 died of late,

And that old priest whom John of Salis-  
 bury trusted

Hath sent another.

*Henry.* Secret?

*Rosamund.* I but ask'd her

One question, and she primm'd her mouth  
 and put

Her hands together—thus—and said, God  
 help her,

That she was sworn to silence.

*Henry.* What did you ask her?

*Rosamund.* Some daily something—  
 nothing.

*Henry.* Secret, then?

*Rosamund.* I do not love her. Must you  
 go, my liege,

So suddenly?

*Henry.* I came to England suddenly,  
 And on a great occasion sure to wake  
 As great a wrath in Becket—

*Rosamund.* Always Becket!  
He always comes between us.

*Henry.* —And to meet it  
I needs must leave as suddenly. It is  
raining,  
Put on your hood and see me to the  
bounds. *[Exeunt.]*

*Margery (singing behind scene)*

Babble in bower  
Under the rose!  
Bee mustn't buzz,  
Whoop—but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,  
Nobody near!  
Grasshopper, grasshopper,  
Whoop—you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,  
Tit on the tree!  
Bird mustn't tell,  
Whoop—he can see.

*Enter MARGERY*

I ha' been but a week here and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, for to be sure it's no more than a week since our old Father Philip that has confessed our mother for twenty years, and she was hard put to it, and to speak truth, nigh at the end of our last crust, and that mouldy, and she cried out on him to put me forth in the world and to make me a woman of the world, and to win my own bread, whereupon he asked our mother if I could keep a quiet tongue i' my head, and not speak till I was spoke to, and I answered for myself that I never spoke more than was needed, and he told me he would advance me to the service of a great lady, and took me ever so far away, and gave me a great pat o' the cheek for a pretty wench, and said it was a pity to blindfold such eyes as mine, and such to be sure they be, but he blinded 'em for all that, and so brought me no-hows as I may say, and the more shame to him after his promise, into a garden and not into the world, and bad me whatever I saw not to speak one word, an' it 'ud be well for me in the end, for there were great ones who would look after me, and to be sure I ha'

seen great ones to-day—and then not to speak one word, for that's the rule o' the garden, tho' to be sure if I had been Eve i' the garden I shouldn't ha' minded the apple, for what's an apple, you know, save to a child, and I'm no child, but more a woman o' the world than my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen—tho' to be sure if I hadn't minded it we should all on us ha' had to go, bless the Saints, wi' bare backs, but the backs 'ud ha' countenanced one another, and belike it 'ud ha' been always summer, and anyhow I am as well-shaped as my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, and what's the good of my talking to myself, for here comes my lady (*enter ROSAMUND*), and, my lady, tho' I shouldn't speak one word, I wish you joy o' the King's brother.

*Rosamund.* What is it you mean?

*Margery.* I mean your goodman, your husband, my lady, for I saw your ladyship a-parting wi' him even now i' the coppice, when I was a-getting o' bluebells for your ladyship's nose to smell on—and I ha' seen the King once at Oxford, and he's as like the King as fingernail to fingernail, and I thought at first it was the King, only you know the King's married, for King Louis—

*Rosamund.* Married!

*Margery.* Years and years, my lady, for her husband, King Louis—

*Rosamund.* Hush!

*Margery.* —And I thought if it were the King's brother he had a better bride than the King, for the people do say that his is bad beyond all reckoning, and—

*Rosamund.* The people lie.

*Margery.* V'ry like, my lady, but most on 'em know an honest woman and a lady when they see her, and besides they say, she makes songs, and that's against her, for I never knew an honest woman that could make songs, tho' to be sure our mother 'ill sing me old songs by the hour, but then, God help her, she had 'em from her mother, and her mother from her mother back and back for ever so long, but none on 'em ever made songs, and they were all honest.

*Rosamund.* Go, you shall tell me of her some other time.

*Margery.* There's none so much to tell on her, my lady, only she kept the seventh commandment better than some I know on, or I couldn't look your ladyship i' the face, and she brew'd the best ale in all Glo'ster, that is to say in her time when she had the 'Crown.'

*Rosamund.* The crown! who?

*Margery.* Mother.

*Rosamund.* I mean her whom you call—fancy—my husband's brother's wife.

*Margery.* Oh, Queen Eleanor. Yes, my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to speak a word, I can tell you all about her, if—

*Rosamund.* No word now. I am faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay—go. What! will you anger me?

[*Exit MARGERY.* He charged me not to question any of those About me. Have I? no! she question'd me. Did she not slander *him*? Should she stay here?

May she not tempt me, being at my side, To question *her*? Nay, can I send her hence

Without his kingly leave? I am in the dark. I have lived, poor bird, from cage to cage, and known

Nothing but him—happy to know no more,

So that he loved me—and he loves me—yes,

And bound me by his love to secrecy Till his own time.

Eleanor, Eleanor, have I Not heard ill things of her in France? Oh, she's

The Queen of France. I see it—some confusion,

Some strange mistake. I did not hear aright,

Myself confused with parting from the King.

*Margery (behind scene).* Bee mustn't buzz, Whoop—but he knows.

*Rosamund.* Yet her—what her? he hinted of some her—

When he was here before—

Something that would displease me. Hath he stray'd

From love's clear path into the common bush.

And, being scratch'd, returns to his true rose,

Who hath not thorn enough to prick him for it,

Ev'n with a word?

*Margery (behind scene).* Bird mustn't tell, Whoop—he can see.

*Rosamund.* I would not hear him. Nay—there's more—he frown'd

'No mate for her, if it should come to that'—

To that—to what?

*Margery (behind scene).* Whoop—but he knows,

Whoop—but he knows.

*Rosamund.* O God! some dreadful truth is breaking on me—

Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

[*Enter GEOFFREY.* Geoffrey!

*Geoffrey.* What are you crying for, when the sun shines?

*Rosamund.* Hath not thy father left us to ourselves?

*Geoffrey.* Ay, but he's taken the rain with him. I hear Margery: I'll go play with her.

[*Exit GEOFFREY.*

*Rosamund.* Rainbow, stay,  
Gleam upon gloom,  
Bright as my dream,  
Rainbow, stay!  
But it passes away,  
Gloom upon gleam,  
Dark as my doom—  
O rainbow stay.

## SCENE II

*Outside the Woods near Rosamund's Bower*

ELEANOR, FITZURSE

*Eleanor.* Up from the salt lips of the land we two

Have track'd the King to this dark inland wood;

And somewhere hereabouts he vanish'd. Here

His turtle builds; his exit is our adit:

Watch! he will out again, and presently,

Seeing he must to Westminster and crown  
Young Henry there to-morrow.

*Fitzurse.* We have watch'd  
So long in vain, he hath pass'd out again,  
And on the other side.

[*A great horn winded.*  
Hark! Madam!

*Eleanor.* Ay,  
How ghostly sounds that horn in the black  
wood!

[*A countryman flying.*  
Whither away, man? what are you flying  
from?

*Countryman.* The witch! the witch! she  
sits naked by a great heap of gold in the  
middle of the wood, and when the horn  
sounds she comes out as a wolf. Get you  
hence! a man passed in there to-day: I  
holla'd to him, but he didn't hear me:  
he'll never out again, the witch has got  
him. I daren't stay—I daren't stay!

*Eleanor.* Kind of the witch to give thee  
warning tho'. [Man flies.  
Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's  
fear

Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd the  
King?

[*Horn sounded. Another flying.*  
*Fitzurse.* Again! stay, fool, and tell me  
why thou fliest.

*Countryman.* Fly thou too. The King  
keeps his forest head of game here, and  
when that horn sounds, a score of wolf-  
dogs are let loose that will tear thee piece-  
meal. Linger not till the third horn. Fly!

[*Exit.*

*Eleanor.* This is the likelier tale. We  
have hit the place.  
Now let the King's fine game look to itself.

[*Horn.*

*Fitzurse.* Again!—  
And far on in the dark heart of the  
wood

I hear the yelping of the hounds of  
hell.

*Eleanor.* I have my dagger here to still  
their throats.

*Fitzurse.* Nay, Madam, not to-night—  
the night is falling.

What can be done to-night?

*Eleanor.* Well—well—away.

## SCENE III

*Traitor's Meadow at Fréteval. Pavilions and  
Tents of the English and French Baronage*

BECKET and HERBERT OF BOSHAM

*Becket.* See here!

*Herbert.* What's here?

*Becket.* A notice from the priest,  
To whom our John of Salisbury committed  
The secret of the bower, that our wolf-  
Queen

Is prowling round the fold. I should be  
back

In England ev'n for this.

*Herbert.* These are by-things

In the great cause.

*Becket.* The by-things of the Lord  
Are the wrong'd innocences that will cry  
From all the hidden by-ways of the world  
In the great day against the wronger. I  
know

Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all, before  
The Church should suffer wrong!

*Herbert.* Do you see, my lord,  
There is the King talking with Walter  
Map?

*Becket.* He hath the Pope's last letters,  
and they threaten  
The immediate thunder-blast of interdict:  
Yet he can scarce be touching upon those,  
Or scarce would smile that fashion.

*Herbert.* Winter sunshine!  
Beware of opening out thy bosom to it,  
Lest thou, myself, and all thy flock should  
catch

An after ague-fit of trembling. Look!  
He bows, he bares his head, he is coming  
hither.

Still with a smile.

*Enter KING HENRY and WALTER MAP*

*Henry.* We have had so many hours  
together, Thomas,  
So many happy hours alone together,  
That I would speak with you once more  
alone.

*Becket.* My liege, your will and happi-  
ness are mine.

[*Exeunt KING and BECKET.*

*Herbert.* The same smile still.

*Walter Map.* Do you see that great black

cloud that hath come over the sun and cast us all into shadow?

*Herbert.* And feel it too.

*Walter Map.* And see you yon sidebeam that is forced from under it, and sets the church-tower over there all a-hell-fire as it were?

*Herbert.* Ay.

*Walter Map.* It is this black, bell-silencing, anti-marrying, burial-hindering interdict that hath squeezed out this side-smile upon Canterbury, whereof may come conflagration. Were I Thomas, I wouldn't trust it. Sudden change is a house on sand; and tho' I count Henry honest enough, yet when fear creeps in at the front, honesty steals out at the back, and the King at last is fairly scared by this cloud—this interdict. I have been more for the King than the Church in this matter—yea, even for the sake of the Church: for, truly, as the case stood, you had safelier have slain an archbishop than a she-goat: but our recoverer and upholder of customs hath in this crowning of young Henry by York and London so violated the immemorial usage of the Church, that, like the gravedigger's child I have heard of, trying to ring the bell, he hath half-hanged himself in the rope of the Church, or rather pulled all the Church with the Holy Father astride of it down upon his own head.

*Herbert.* Were you there?

*Walter Map.* In the church rope?—no. I was at the crowning, for I have pleasure in the pleasure of crowds, and to read the faces of men at a great show.

*Herbert.* And how did Roger of York comport himself?

*Walter Map.* As magnificently and archiepiscopally as our Thomas would have done: only there was a dare-devil in his eye—I should say a dare-Becket. He thought less of two kings than of one Roger the king of the occasion. Foliot is the holier man, perhaps the better. Once or twice there ran a twitch across his face as who should say what's to follow? but Salisbury was a calf cowed by Mother Church, and every now and then glancing about him like a thief at night when he

hears a door open in the house and thinks 'the master.'

*Herbert.* And the father-king?

*Walter Map.* The father's eye was so tender it would have called a goose off the green, and once he strove to hide his face, like the Greek king when his daughter was sacrificed, but he thought better of it: it was but the sacrifice of a kingdom to his son, a smaller matter; but as to the young crownling himself, he looked so malapert in the eyes, that had I fathered him I had given him more of the rod than the sceptre. Then followed the thunder of the captains and the shouting, and so we came on to the banquet, from whence there puffed out such an incense of unctuousness into the nostrils of our Gods of Church and State, that Lucullus or Apicius might have sniffed it in their Hades of heathenism, so that the smell of their own roast had not come across it—

*Herbert.* Map, tho' you make your butt too big, you overshoot it.

*Walter Map.*—For as to the fish, they de-miracled the miraculous draught, and might have sunk a navy—

*Herbert.* There again, Goliasing and Goliathising!

*Walter Map.*—And as for the flesh at table, a whole Peter's sheet, with all manner of game, and four-footed things, and fowls—

*Herbert.* And all manner of creeping things too?

*Walter Map.*—Well, there were Abbots—but they did not bring their women; and so we were dull enough at first, but in the end we flourished out into a merriment; for the old King would act servitor and hand a dish to his son; whereupon my Lord of York—his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in it than the backward scrape of the clown's heel—'great honour,' says he, 'from the King's self to the King's son.' Did you hear the young King's quip?

*Herbert.* No, what was it?

*Walter Map.* Glancing at the days when his father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered:—'Should not an earl's son wait

on a king's son?' And when the cold corners of the King's mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part child-like, to be freed from the dulness—part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a royal necessity—part childlike again—when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves—many midriff-shaken even to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes—but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration—tho', to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lacrymation of a lamentation; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King's feet. They have made it up again—for the moment.

*Herbert.* Thanks to the blessed Magdalen, whose day it is.

*Re-enter HENRY and BECKET. (During their conference the BARONS and BISHOPS of FRANCE and ENGLAND come in at back of stage.)*

*Becket.* Ay, King! for in thy kingdom, as thou knowest,

The spouse of the Great King, thy King, hath fallen—

The daughter of Zion lies beside the way—  
The priests of Baal tread her underfoot—  
The golden ornaments are stolen from her—

*Henry.* Have I not promised to restore her, Thomas,

And send thee back again to Canterbury?

*Becket.* Send back again those exiles of my kin

Who wander famine-wasted thro' the world.

*Henry.* Have I not promised, man, to send them back?

*Becket.* Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken thro' the pales

Of privilege, crowning thy young son by York,

London and Salisbury—not Canterbury.

*Henry.* York crown'd the Conqueror—not Canterbury.

*Becket.* There was no Canterbury in William's time.

*Henry.* But Hereford, you know, crown'd the first Henry.

*Becket.* But Anselm crown'd this Henry o'er again.

*Henry.* And thou shalt crown my Henry o'er again.

*Becket.* And is it then with thy goodwill that I

Proceed against thine evil councillors,  
And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those

Who made the second mitre play the first,  
And acted me?

*Henry.* Well, well, then—have thy way!

It may be they were evil councillors.

What more, my lord Archbishop? What more, Thomas?

I make thee full amends. Say all thy say,  
But blaze not out before the Frenchmen here.

*Becket.* More? Nothing, so thy promise be thy deed.

*Henry (holding out his hand).* Give me thy hand. My Lords of France and England,

My friend of Canterbury and myself  
Are now once more at perfect amity.

Unkingly should I be, and most un-  
knightly,

Not striving still, however much in vain,  
To rival him in Christian charity.

*Herbert.* All praise to Heaven, and sweet St. Magdalen!

*Henry.* And so farewell until we meet in England.

*Becket.* I fear, my liege, we may not meet in England.

*Henry.* How, do you make me a traitor?

*Becket.* No, indeed!

That be far from thee.

*Henry.* Come, stay with us, then,  
Before you part for England.

*Becket.* I am bound  
For that one hour to stay with good King  
Louis,

Who helpt me when none else.

*Herbert.* He said thy life  
Was not one hour's worth in England  
save

King Henry gave thee first the kiss of  
peace.

*Henry.* He said so? Louis, did he? look you, Herbert,  
 When I was in mine anger with King Louis,  
 I swore I would not give the kiss of peace,  
 Not on French ground, nor any ground but English,  
 Where his cathedral stands. Mine old friend, Thomas,  
 I would there were that perfect trust between us,  
 That health of heart, once ours, ere Pope or King  
 Had come between us! Even now—who knows?—

I might deliver all things to thy hand—  
 If . . . but I say no more . . . farewell, my lord.

*Becket.* Farewell, my liege!

[*Exit HENRY, then the BARONS and BISHOPS.*]

*Walter Map.* There again! when the full fruit of the royal promise might have dropt into thy mouth hadst thou but opened it to thank him.

*Becket.* He fenced his royal promise with an *if*.

*Walter Map.* And is the King's *if* too high a stile for your lordship to overstep and come at all things in the next field?

*Becket.* Ay, if this *if* be like the Devil's '*if*' Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

*Herbert.* Oh, Thomas,  
 I could fall down and worship thee, my Thomas,

For thou hast trodden this wine-press alone.

*Becket.* Nay, of the people there are many with me.

*Walter Map.* I am not altogether with you, my lord, tho' I am none of those that would raise a storm between you, lest ye should draw together like two ships in a calm. You wrong the King: he meant what he said to-day. Who shall vouch for his to-morrows? One word further. Doth not the *fewness* of anything make the fulness of it in estimation? Is not virtue prized mainly for its rarity and great baseness loathed as an exception: for were all, my lord, as noble as yourself, who would look up to you? and were all as base as—who

shall I say—Fitzurse and his following—who would look down upon them? My lord, you have put so many of the King's household out of communion, that they begin to smile at it.

*Becket.* At their peril, at their peril—

*Walter Map.*—For tho' the drop may hollow out the dead stone, doth not the living skin thicken against perpetual whippings? This is the second grain of good counsel I ever proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by the rule of frequency. Have I sown it in salt? I trust not, for before God I promise you the King hath many more wolves than he can tame in his woods of England, and if it suit their purpose to howl for the King, and you still move against him, you may have no less than to die for it; but God and his free wind grant your lordship a happy home-return and the King's kiss of peace in Kent. Farewell! I must follow the King. [*Exit.*]

*Herbert.* Ay, and I warrant the customs.

Did the King  
 Speak of the customs?

*Becket.* No!—To die for it—I live to die for it, I die to live for it.

The State will die, the Church can never die.

The King's not like to die for that which dies;

But I must die for that which never dies.  
 It will be so—my visions in the Lord:

It must be so, my friend! the wolves of England

Must murder her one shepherd, that the sheep

May feed in peace. False figure, Map would say.

Earth's falses are heaven's truths. And when my voice

Is martyr'd mute, and this man disappears,  
 That perfect trust may come again between us,

And there, there, there, not here I shall rejoice

To find my stray sheep back within the fold.

The crowd are scattering, let us move away!

And thence to England.

[*Exeunt.*]



## ACT IV

## SCENE I

*The Outskirts of the Bower*

*Geoffrey (coming out of the wood).* Light again! light again! Margery? no, that's a finer thing there. How it glitters!

*Eleanor (entering).* Come to me, little one. How camest thou hither?

*Geoffrey.* On my legs.

*Eleanor.* And mighty pretty legs too. Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

*Geoffrey.* No; I only love mother.

*Eleanor.* Ay; and who is thy mother?

*Geoffrey.* They call her—— But she lives secret, you see.

*Eleanor.* Why?

*Geoffrey.* Don't know why.

*Eleanor.* Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?

*Geoffrey.* Can't tell.

*Eleanor.* What does she call him?

*Geoffrey.* My liege.

*Eleanor.* Pretty one, how camest thou?

*Geoffrey.* There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glowworm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

*Eleanor.* I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

*Geoffrey.* There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' night because of the bad fairies.

*Eleanor.* She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

*Geoffrey.* But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty, like mother.

*Eleanor.* We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art—(aside) little bastard. Come, here is a golden chain I will give thee if thou wilt lead me to thy mother.

*Geoffrey.* No—no gold. Mother says gold spoils all. Love is the only gold.

*Eleanor.* I love thy mother, my pretty boy. Show me where thou camest out of the wood.

*Geoffrey.* By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

*Eleanor.* Where's the warder?

*Geoffrey.* Very bad. Somebody struck him.

*Eleanor.* Ay? who was that?

*Geoffrey.* Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you'd have heard his horn before now. Come along, then? we shall see the silk here and there, and I want my supper. [Exeunt.]

## SCENE II

*Rosamund's Bower*

*Rosamund.* The boy so late; pray God, he be not lost.

I sent this Margery, and she comes not back;

I sent another, and she comes not back.

I go myself—so many alleys, crossings, Paths, avenues—nay, if I lost him, now The folds have fallen from the mystery, And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

*Enter GEOFFREY and ELEANOR*

*Geoffrey,* the pain thou hast put me to!

[Seeing ELEANOR.]

Ha, you!

How came you hither?

*Eleanor.* Your own child brought me hither!

*Geoffrey.* You said you couldn't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went on and on till I found the light and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

*Rosamund.* How dared you? Know you not this bower is secret,

Of and belonging to the King of England, More sacred than his forests for the chase? Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste

Lest worse befall you.

*Eleanor.* Child, I am mine own self Of and belonging to the King. The King Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,

Almost as many as your true Mussulman—

Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases  
him

To call his wives; but so it chanches, child,  
That I am his main paramour, his sultana.  
But since the fondest pair of doves will jar,  
Ev'n in a cage of gold, we had words of late,  
And thereupon he call'd my children  
bastards.

Do you believe that you are married to  
him?

*Rosamund.* I should believe it.

*Eleanor.* You must not believe it,  
Because I have a wholesome medicine here  
Puts that belief asleep. Your answer,  
beauty!

Do you believe that you are married to  
him?

*Rosamund.* Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the  
ball you lost in the fork of the great willow  
over the brook. Go. See that you do not  
fall in. Go.

*Geoffrey.* And leave you alone with the  
good fairy. She calls you beauty, but I  
don't like her looks. Well, you bid me go,  
and I'll have my ball anyhow. Shall I find  
you asleep when I come back?

*Rosamund.* Go. *[Exit GEOFFREY.]*

*Eleanor.* He is easily found again. Do  
you believe it?

I pray you then to take my sleeping-  
draught;

But if you should not care to take it—see!

*[Draws a dagger.]*

What! have I scared the red rose from  
your face

Into your heart? But this will find it there,  
And dig it from the root for ever.

*Rosamund.* Help! help!

*Eleanor.* They say that walls have ears;  
but these, it seems,

Have none! and I have none—to pity thee.

*Rosamund.* I do beseech you—my child  
is so young,

So backward too; I cannot leave him yet.  
I am not so happy I could not die myself,  
But the child is so young. You have  
children—his;

And mine is the King's child; so, if you  
love him—

Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong  
done

Somehow; but if you do not—there are  
those

Who say you do not love him—let me go  
With my young boy, and I will hide my  
face,

Blacken and gipsyfy it; none shall know  
me;

The King shall never hear of me again,  
But I will beg my bread along the world  
With my young boy, and God will be our  
guide.

I never meant you harm in any way.

Sec, I can say no more.

*Eleanor.* Will you not say you are not  
married to him?

*Rosamund.* Ay, Madam, I can say it, if  
you will.

*Eleanor.* Then is thy pretty boy a  
bastard?

*Rosamund.* No.

*Eleanor.* And thou thyself a proven  
wanton?

*Rosamund.* No.

I am none such. I never loved but one.

I have heard of such that range from love  
to love,

Like the wild beast—if you can call it love.  
I have heard of such—yea, even among  
those

Who sit on thrones—I never saw any such,  
Never knew any such, and howsoever

You do misname me, match'd with any  
such,

I am snow to mud.

*Eleanor.* The more the pity then

That thy true home—the heavens—cry  
out for thee

Who art too pure for earth.

*Enter FITZURSE*

*Fitzurse.* Give her to me.

*Eleanor.* The Judas-lover of our passion-  
play

Hath track'd us hither.

*Fitzurse.* Well, why not? I follow'd  
You and the child: he babbled all the way.  
Give her to me to make my honeymoon.

*Eleanor.* Ay, as the bears love honey.  
Could you keep her

Indungeon'd from one whisper of the  
wind,

Dark even from a side glance of the moon,  
And oublietted in the centre—No!  
I follow out my hate and thy revenge.

*Fitzurse.* You bad me take revenge  
another way—  
To bring her to the dust. . . . Come with  
me, love,  
And I will love thee. . . . Madam, let her  
live.

I have a far-off burrow where the King  
Would miss her and for ever.

*Eleanor.* How sayst thou,  
sweetheart?

Wilt thou go with him? he will marry thee.

*Rosamund.* Give me the poison; set me  
free of him!

[*ELEANOR offers the vial.*  
No, no! I will not have it.

*Eleanor.* Then this other,  
The wiser choice, because my sleeping-  
draught

May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and  
make

Thy body loathsome even to thy child;  
While this but leaves thee with a broken  
heart,

A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over  
which

If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own,  
It must be broken for him.

*Rosamund.* O I see now  
Your purpose is to fright me—a trouba-  
dour

You play with words. You had never used  
so many,

Not if you meant it, I am sure. The  
child . . .

No . . . mercy! No! (*Kneels.*)

*Eleanor.* Play! . . . that  
bosom never

Heaved under the King's hand with such  
true passion

As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot,  
Which it will quench in blood! Slave, if he  
love thee,

Thy life is worth the wrestle for it: arise,  
And dash thyself against me that I may  
slay thee!

The worm! shall I let her go? But ha!  
what's here?

By very God, the cross I gave the King!

His village darling in some lewd caress  
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to her  
own.

By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same! I  
warrant

Thou hast sworn on this my cross a hun-  
dred times

Never to leave him—and that merits death,  
False oath on holy cross—for thou must  
leave him

To-day, but not quite yet. My good  
*Fitzurse,*

The running down the chase is kindlier  
sport

Ev'n than the death. Who knows but that  
thy lover

May plead so pitifully, that I may spare  
thee?

Come hither, man; stand there. (*To ROSA-  
MUND*) Take thy one chance;

Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy lord  
*Fitzurse;*

Crouch even because thou hatest him;  
fawn upon him

For thy life and thy son's.

*Rosamund (rising).* I am a Clifford,

My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.

I am to die then, tho' there stand beside  
thee

One who might grapple with thy dagger,  
if he

Had aught of man, or thou of woman; or I  
Would bow to such a baseness as would  
make me

Most worthy of it: both of us will die,

And I will fly with my sweet boy to heaven,  
And shriek to all the saints among the

stars:

'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of Eng-  
land!

Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor,

Whose doings are a horror to the east,

A hissing in the west! Have we not heard

Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle—nay,  
Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own husband's

father—

Nay, ev'n the accursed heathen Salad-  
deen—

Strike!

I challenge thee to meet me before God.

Answer me there.

*Eleanor (raising the dagger).* This in thy  
bosom, fool,  
And after in thy bastard's!

*Enter BECKET from behind. Catches hold of  
her arm*

*Becket.* Murderess!

*[The dagger falls; they stare at one  
another. After a pause.]*

*Eleanor.* My lord, we know you proud  
of your fine hand,  
But having now admired it long enough,  
We find that it is nightier than it seems—  
At least mine own is frailer: you are  
laming it.

*Becket.* And lamed and maim'd to dis-  
location, better  
Than raised to take a life which I Henry  
bad me  
Guard from the stroke that dooms thee  
after death  
To wail in deathless flame.

*Eleanor.* Nor you, nor I  
Have now to learn, my lord, that our good  
Henry  
Says many a thing in sudden heats, which  
he

Gainsays by next sunrise—often ready  
To tear himself for having said as much.  
My lord, Fitzurse—

*Becket.* He too! what dost thou here?  
Dares the bear slouch into the lion's den?  
One downward plunge of his paw would  
rend away  
Eyesight and manhood, life itself, from  
thee.

Go, lest I blast thee with anathema,  
And make thee a world's horror.

*Fitzurse.* My lord, I shall  
Remember this.

*Becket.* I do remember thee;  
Lest I remember thee to the lion, go.

*[Exit FITZURSE.]*  
Take up your dagger; put it in the sheath.

*Eleanor.* Might not your courtesy stoop  
to hand it me?

But crowns must bow when mitres sit so  
high.

Well—well—too costly to be left or lost.  
*[Picks up the dagger.]*

I had it from an Arab soldan, who,

When I was there in Antioch, marvell'd at  
Our unfamiliar beauties of the west;  
But wonder'd more at my much constancy  
To the monk-king, Louis, our former  
burthen,

From whom, as being too kin, you know,  
my lord,

God's grace and Holy Church deliver'd us.  
I think, time given, I could have talk'd him  
out of

I is ten wives into one. Look at the hilt.  
What excellent workmanship. In our poor  
west

We cannot do it so well.

*Becket.* We can do worse.  
Madam, I saw your dagger at her throat;  
I heard your savage cry.

*Eleanor.* Well acted, was it?  
A comedy meant to seem a tragedy—  
A feint, a farce. My honest lord, you are  
known

Thro' all the courts of Christendom as one  
That mars a cause with over-violence.

You have wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak not of  
myself.

We thought to scare this minion of the  
King

Back from her churchless commerce with  
the King

To the fond arms of her first love, Fitzurse,  
Who swore to marry her. You have spoilt  
the farce.

My savage cry? Why, she—she—when I  
strove

To work against her license for her good,  
Bark'd out at me such monstrous charges,  
that

The King himself, for love of his own  
sons,

If hearing, would have spurn'd her; where-  
upon

I menaced her with this, as when we  
threaten

A yelper with a stick. Nay, I deny not  
That I was somewhat anger'd. Do you  
hear me?

Believe or no, I care not. You have lost  
The ear of the King. I have it. . . . My lord  
Paramount,

Our great High-priest, will not your  
Holiness

Vouchsafe a gracious answer to your Queen?

*Becket.* Rosamund hath not answer'd you one word;

Madam, I will not answer you one word. Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee.

Leave it, daughter;

Come thou with me to Godstow nunnery, And live what may be left thee of a life Saved as by miracle alone with Him Who gave it.

*Re-enter GEOFFREY*

*Geoffrey.* Mother, you told me a great fib: it wasn't in the willow.

*Becket.* Follow us, my son, and we will find it for thee—

Or something manlier.

[*Exeunt* BECKET, ROSAMUND, and GEOFFREY.]

*Eleanor.* The world hath trick'd her—that's the King; if so,

There was the farce, the feint—not mine. And yet

I am all but sure my dagger was a feint Till the worm turn'd—not life shot up in blood,

But death drawn in;—(*looking at the vial*) *this* was no feint then? no.

But can I swear to that, had she but given Plain answer to plain query? nay, methinks

Had she but bow'd herself to meet the wave

Of humiliation, worshipt whom she loathed,

I should have let her be, scorn'd her too much

To harm her. Henry—Becket tells him this—

To take my life might lose him Aquitaine. Too politic for that. Imprison me?

No, for it came to nothing—only a feint. Did she not tell me I was playing on her?

I'll swear to mine own self it was a feint. Why should I swear, Eleanor, who am, or was,

A sovereign power? The King plucks out their eyes

Who anger him, and shall not I, the Queen,

Tear out her heart—kill, kill with knife or venom

One of his slanderous harlots? 'None of such?'

I love her none the more. Tut, the chance gone,

She lives—but not for him; one point is gain'd.

O I, that thro' the Pope divorced King Louis,

Scorning his monkery,—I that wedded Henry,

Honouring his manhood—will he not mock at me

The jealous fool balk'd of her will—with *him*?

But he and he must never meet again.

Reginald Fitzurse!

*Re-enter FITZURSE*

*Fitzurse.* Here, Madam, at your pleasure.

*Eleanor.* My pleasure is to have a man about me.

Why did you slink away so like a cur?

*Fitzurse.* Madam, I am as much man as the King.

Madam, I fear Church-censures like your King.

*Eleanor.* He grovels to the Church when he's black-blooded,

But kinglike fought the proud archbishop, —kinglike

Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly sires, The Normans, striving still to break or bind

The spiritual giant with our island laws And customs, made me for the moment proud

Ev'n of that stale Church-bond which link'd me with him

To bear him kingly sons. I am not so sure But that I love him still. Thou as much man!

No more of that; we will to France and be Beforehand with the King, and brew from out

This Godstow-Becket intermeddling such A strong hate-philtre as may madden him

—madden

Against his priest beyond all hellebore.

## ACT V

## SCENE I

*Castle in Normandy. King's Chamber*

HENRY, ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT,  
JOCELYN OF SALISBURY

*Roger of York.* Nay, nay, my liege,  
He rides abroad with armed followers, —  
Hath broken all his promises to thyself,  
Cursed and anathematised us right and  
left,

Stirr'd up a party there against your son—  
*Henry.* Roger of York, you always hated  
him,

Even when you both were boys at Theobald's.

*Roger of York.* I always hated boundless  
arrogance.

In mine own cause I strove against him  
there,

And in thy cause I strive against him now.

*Henry.* I cannot think he moves against  
my son,  
Knowing right well with what a tender-  
ness

He loved my son.

*Roger of York.* Before you made him  
king.

But Becket ever moves against a king.

The Church is all—the crime to be a king.

We trust your Royal Grace, lord of more  
land

Than any crown in Europe, will not yield  
To lay your neck beneath your citizen's  
heel.

*Henry.* Not to a Gregory of my throning!  
No.

*Foliot.* My royal liege, in aiming at your  
love,

It may be sometimes I have overshot  
My duties to our Holy Mother Church,  
Tho' all the world allows I fall no inch  
Behind this Becket, rather go beyond  
In scourgings, macerations, mortifyings,  
Fasts, disciplines that clear the spiritual  
eye,

And break the soul from earth. Let all  
that be.

I boast not: but you know thro' all this  
quarrel

I still have cleaved to the crown, in hope  
the crown

Would cleave to me that but obey'd the  
crown,

Crowning your son; for which our loyal  
service,

And since we likewise swore to obey the  
customs,

York and myself, and our good Salisbury  
here,

Are push'd from out communion of the  
Church.

*Jocelyn of Salisbury.* Becket hath trodden  
on us like worms, my liege;

Trodden one half dead; one half, but half-  
alive,

Cries to the King.

*Henry (aside).* Take care o' thyself, O  
King.

*Jocelyn of Salisbury.* Being so crush'd  
and so humiliated

We scarcely dare to bless the food we eat  
Because of Becket.

*Henry.* What would ye have me do?

*Roger of York.* Summon your barons;  
take their counsel: yet

I know—could swear—as long as Becket  
breathes,

Your Grace will never have one quiet hour.

*Henry.* What? . . . Ay . . . but pray you  
do not work upon me.

I see your drift . . . it may be so . . . and yet  
You know me easily anger'd. Will you  
hence?

He shall absolve you . . . you shall have  
redress.

I have a dizzying headache. Let me rest.

I'll call you by and by.

[*Exeunt* ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT, and  
JOCELYN OF SALISBURY.]

Would he were dead! I have lost all love  
for him.

If God would take him in some sudden way—  
Would he were dead. [*Lies down.*]

*Page (entering).* My liege, the Queen of  
England.

*Henry.* God's eyes! [*Starting up.*]

*Enter* ELEANOR

*Eleanor.* Of England? Say of  
Aquitaine.

I am no Queen of England. I had dream'd  
I was the bride of England, and a queen.

Henry. And,—while you dream'd you  
were the bride of England,—  
Stirring her baby-king against me? ha!

Eleanor. The brideless Becket is thy  
king and mine:

I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

Henry. Except I clap thee into prison  
here,  
Lest thou shouldst play the wanton there  
again.

Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of Aquitaine!  
You were but Aquitaine to Louis—no  
wife;

You are only Aquitaine to me—no wife.

Eleanor. And why, my lord, should I be  
wife to one

That only wedded me for Aquitaine?

Yet this no wife—her six and thirty sail  
Of Provence blew you to your English  
throne;

And this no wife has born you four brave  
sons,

And one of them at least is like to prove  
Bigger in our small world than thou art.

Henry. Ay—  
Richard, if he be mine—I hope him mine.  
But thou art like enough to make him  
thine.

Eleanor. Becket is like enough to make  
all his.

Henry. Methought I had recover'd of  
the Becket,

That all was planed and bevell'd smooth  
again,

Save from some hateful cantrip of thine  
own.

Eleanor. I will go live and die in  
Aquitaine.

I dream'd I was the consort of a king,  
Not one whose back his priest has broken.

Henry. What!  
Is the end come? You, will you crown my  
foe

My victor in mid-battle? I will be  
Sole master of my house. The end is mine.  
What game, what juggle, what devilry are  
you playing?

Why do you thrust this Becket on me  
again?

Eleanor. Why? for I am true wife, and  
have my fears

Lest Becket thrust you even from your  
throne.

Do you know this cross, my liege?

Henry (turning his head). Away! Not I.

Eleanor. Not ev'n the central diamond,  
worth, I think,

Half of the Antioch whence I had it.

Henry. That?

Eleanor. I gave it you, and you your  
paramour;

She sends it back, as being dead to earth,  
So dead henceforth to you.

Henry. Dead! you have murder'd her,  
Found out her secret bower and murder'd  
her.

Eleanor. Your Becket knew the secret of  
your bower.

Henry (calling out). Ho there! thy rest  
of life is hopeless prison.

Eleanor. And what would my own  
Aquitaine say to that?

First, free thy captive from her hopeless  
prison.

Henry. O devil, can I free her from the  
grave?

Eleanor. You are too tragic: both of us  
are players

In such a comedy as our court of Provence  
Had laugh'd at. That's a delicate Latin lay  
Of Walter Map: the lady holds the cleric  
Lovelier than any soldier, his poor tonsure  
A crown of Empire. Will you have it  
again?

(Offering the cross. He dashes it down.)

St. Cupid, that is too irreverent.

Then mine once more. (Puts it on.)

Your cleric hath your lady.  
Nay, what uncomely faces, could he see  
you!

Foam at the mouth because King Thomas,  
lord

Not only of your vassals but amours,  
Thro' chastest honour of the Decalogue  
Hath used the full authority of his Church  
To put her into Godstow nunnery.

Henry. To put her into Godstow nun-  
nery!

He dared not—liar! yet, yet I remember—  
I do remember.

## SCENE I

## BECKET

He had me put her into a nunnery—  
 Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devilstow!  
 The Church! the Church!  
 God's eyes! would the Church were down  
 in hell! [Exit.]

*Eleanor.* Aha!

*Enter the four KNIGHTS*

*Fitzurse.* What made the King cry out so  
 furiously?

*Eleanor.* Our Becket, who will not  
 absolve the Bishops.

I think ye four have cause to love this  
 Becket.

*Fitzurse.* I hate him for his insolence  
 to all.

*De Tracy.* And I for all his insolence to  
 thee.

*De Brito.* I hate him for I hate him is  
 my reason,

And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.

*De Morville.* I do not love him, for he  
 did his best

To break the barons, and now braves the  
 King.

*Eleanor.* Strike, then, at once, the King  
 would have him—See!

*Re-enter HENRY*

*Henry.* No man to love me, honour me,  
 obey me!

Sluggards and fools!

The slave that eat my bread has kick'd his  
 King!

The dog I cramm'd with dainties worried  
 me!

The fellow that on a lame jade came to  
 court,

A ragged cloak for saddle—he, he, he,  
 To shake my throne, to push into my  
 chamber—

My bed, where ev'n the slave is private—  
 he—

I'll have her out again, he shall absolve  
 The bishops—they but did my will—not  
 you—

Sluggards and fools, why do you stand and  
 stare?

You are no King's men—you—you—you  
 are Becket's men.

Down with King Henry! up with the  
 Archbishop!

Will no man free me from this pestilent  
 priest? [Exit.]

[*The KNIGHTS draw their swords.*]

*Eleanor.* Are ye king's men? I am king's  
 woman, I.

*The Knights.* King's men! King's men!

## SCENE II

*A Room in Canterbury Monastery*

BECKET and JOHN OF SALISBURY

*Becket.* York said so?

*John of Salisbury.* Yes: a man may take  
 good counsel

Ev'n from his foe.

*Becket.* York will say anything.  
 What is he saying now? gone to the King  
 And taken our anathema with him. York!  
 Can the King de-anathematise this York?

*John of Salisbury.* Thomas, I would thou  
 hadst return'd to England,

Like some wise prince of this world from  
 his wars,

With more of olive-branch and amnesty  
 For foes at home—thou hast raised the  
 world against thee.

*Becket.* Why, John, my kingdom is not  
 of this world.

*John of Salisbury.* If it were more of this  
 world it might be

More of the next. A policy of wise pardon  
 Wins here as well as there. To bless thine  
 enemies—

*Becket.* Ay, mine, not Heaven's.

*John of Salisbury.* And may  
 there not be something

Of this world's leaven in thee too, when  
 crying

On Holy Church to thunder out her rights  
 And thine own wrong so pitilessly? Ah,  
 Thomas,

The lightnings that we think are only  
 Heaven's

Flash sometimes out of earth against the  
 heavens.

The soldier, when he lets his whole self go  
 Lost in the common good, the common  
 wrong,



Strikes trueſt ev'n for his own ſelf. I crave  
Thy pardon—I have ſtill thy leave to  
ſpeak.  
Thou haſt waged God's war againſt the  
King; and yet  
We are ſelf-uncertain creatures, and we  
may,  
Yea, even when we know not, mix our  
ſpites  
And private hates with our defence of  
Heaven.

*Enter EDWARD GRIM*

*Becket.* Thou art but yeſterday from  
Cambridge, Grim;  
What ſay ye there of Becket?  
*Grim.* I believe him  
The braveſt in our roll of Primates down  
From Auſtin—there are ſome—for there  
are men  
Of canker'd judgment everywhere—  
*Becket.* Who hold  
With York, with York againſt me.  
*Grim.* Well, my lord,  
A ſtranger monk deſires acceſs to you.  
*Becket.* York againſt Canterbury, York  
againſt God!  
I am open to him. *[Exit GRIM.]*

*Enter ROSAMUND as a Monk*

*Rosamund.* Can I ſpeak with you  
Alone, my father?  
*Becket.* Come you to confeſs?  
*Rosamund.* Not now.  
*Becket.* Then ſpeak; this  
is my other ſelf,  
Who like my conſcience never lets me be.  
*Rosamund (throwing back the cowl).* I  
know him; our good John of Salis-  
bury.  
*Becket.* Breaking already from thy novi-  
ciate  
To plunge into this bitter world again—  
Theſe wells of Marah. I am grieved, my  
daughter.  
I thought that I had made a peace for thee.  
*Rosamund.* Small peace was mine in my  
noviciate, father,  
Thro' all closed doors a dreadful whiſper  
crept

That thou wouldeſt excommunicate the  
King.  
I could not eat, ſleep, pray: I had with me  
The monk's diſguiſe thou gav'eſt me for  
my bower:  
I think our Abbeſs knew it and allow'd it.  
I fled, and found thy name a charm to  
get me  
Food, roof, and reſt. I met a robber once,  
I told him I was bound to ſee the Arch-  
biſhop;  
'Paſs on,' he ſaid, and in thy name I paſſ'd  
From houſe to houſe. In one a ſon ſtone-  
blind  
Sat by his mother's hearth: he had gone  
too far  
Into the King's own woods; and the poor  
mother,  
Soon as ſhe learnt I was a friend of thine,  
Cried out againſt the cruelty of the King.  
I ſaid it was the King's courts, not the  
King;  
But ſhe would not believe me, and ſhe  
wiſh'd  
The Church were king: ſhe had ſeen the  
Archbiſhop once,  
So mild, ſo kind. The people love thee,  
father.  
*Becket.* Alas! when I was Chancellor to  
the King,  
I fear I was as cruel as the King.  
*Rosamund.* Cruel? Oh, no—it is the law,  
not he;  
The cuſtoms of the realm.  
*Becket.* The cuſtoms! cuſtoms!  
*Rosamund.* My lord, you have not ex-  
communicated him?  
Oh, if you have, abſolve him!  
*Becket.* Daughter, daughter,  
Deal not with things you know not.  
*Rosamund.* I know him.  
Then you have done it, and I call you cruel.  
*John of Salisbury.* No, daughter, you  
miſtake our good Archbiſhop;  
For once in France the King had been ſo  
harſh,  
He thought to excommunicate him—  
Thomas,  
You could not—old affection maſter'd you,  
You falter'd into tears.  
*Rosamund.* God bleſs him for it.

*Becket.* Nay, make me not a woman,  
John of Salisbury,  
Nor make me traitor to my holy office.  
Did not a man's voice ring along the aisle,  
'The King is sick and almost unto death.'  
How could I excommunicate him then?

*Rosamund.* And wilt thou excommunicate him now?

*Becket.* Daughter, my time is short, I shall not do it.

And were it longer—well—I should not do it.

*Rosamund.* Thanks in this life, and in the life to come.

*Becket.* Get thee back to thy nunnery with all haste;

Let this be thy last trespass. But one question—

How fares thy pretty boy, the little Geoffrey?

No fever, cough, croup, sickness?

*Rosamund.* No, but saved From all that by our solitude. The plagues That smite the city spare the solitudes.

*Becket.* God save him from all sickness of the soul!

Thee too, thy solitude among thy nuns,  
May that save thee! Doth he remember me?

*Rosamund.* I warrant him.

*Becket.* He is marvellously like thee.

*Rosamund.* Liker the King.

*Becket.* No, daughter.

*Rosamund.* Ay, but wait Till his nose rises; he will be very king.

*Becket.* Ev'n so: but think not of the King: farewell!

*Rosamund.* My lord, the city is full of armed men.

*Becket.* Ev'n so: farewell!

*Rosamund.* I will but pass to vespers,  
And breathe one prayer for my liege-lord the King,

His child and mine own soul, and so return.

*Becket.* Pray for me too: much need of prayer have I.

[ROSAMUND kneels and goes.

Dan John, how much we lose, we celibates,  
Lacking the love of woman and of child.

*John of Salisbury.* More gain than loss;  
for of your wives you shall

Find one a slut whose fairest linen seems  
Foul as her dust-cloth, if she used it—one  
So charged with tongue, that every thread  
of thought

Is broken ere it joins—a shrew to boot,  
Whose evil song far on into the night  
Thrills to the topmost tile—no hope but  
death;

One slow, fat, white, a burthen of the  
hearth;

And one that being thwarted ever swoons  
And weeps herself into the place of power;

And one an *uxor pauperis* *Ibyci*.

So rare the household homemaking bee,  
Man's help! but we, we have the Blessed  
Virgin

For worship, and our Mother Church for  
bride;

And all the souls we saved and father'd  
here

Will greet us as our babes in Paradise.

What noise was that? she told us of arm'd  
men

Here in the city. Will you not withdraw?

*Becket.* I once was out with Henry in the  
days

When Henry loved me, and we came upon  
A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still

I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she did  
not stir;

The snow had frozen round her, and she sat  
Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold eggs.

Look! how this love, this mother, runs  
thro' all

The world God made—even the beast—the  
bird!

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, still a lover of the  
beast and bird?

But these arm'd men—will you not hide  
yourself?

Perchance the fierce De Brocs from Salt-  
wood Castle,

To assail our Holy Mother lest she brood  
Too long o'er this hard egg, the world,

and send

Her whole heart's heat into it, till it break  
Into young angels. Pray you, hide yourself.

*Becket.* There was a little fair-hair'd  
Norman maid

Lived in my mother's house: if Rosa-  
mund is

The world's rose, as her name imports her  
—she

Was the world's lily.

*John of Salisbury.* Ay, and what of her?

*Becket.* She died of leprosy.

*John of Salisbury.* I know not why  
You call these old things back again, my  
lord.

*Becket.* The drowning man, they say,  
remembers all

The chances of his life, just ere he dies.

*John of Salisbury.* Ay—but these arm'd  
men—will you drown yourself?

He loses half the meed of martyrdom

Who will be martyr when he might escape.

*Becket.* What day of the week? Tuesday?

*John of Salisbury.* Tuesday, my lord.

*Becket.* On a Tuesday was I born, and  
on a Tuesday

Baptized; and on a Tuesday did I fly  
Forth from Northampton; on a Tuesday  
pass'd

From England into bitter banishment;  
On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to me  
The ghostly warning of my martyrdom;  
On a Tuesday from mine exile I return'd,  
And on a Tuesday—

[*TRACY enters, then FITZURSE, DE  
BRITO, and DE MORVILLE. MONKS  
following.*

—on a Tuesday— Tracy!

(*A long silence broken by FITZURSE saying,  
contemptuously,*  
God help thee!

*John of Salisbury (aside).* How the good  
Archbishop reddens!

He never yet could brook the note of  
scorn.

*Fitzurse.* My lord, we bring a message  
from the King

Beyond the water; will you have it alone,  
Or with these listeners near you?

*Becket.* As you will.

*Fitzurse.* Nay, as you will.

*Becket.* Nay, as you will.

*John of Salisbury.* Why then  
Better perhaps to speak with them apart.  
Let us withdraw.

[*All go out except the four KNIGHTS  
and BECKET.*

*Fitzurse.* We are all alone with him.

Shall I not smite him with his own cross-  
staff?

*De Morville.* No, look! the door is open:  
let him be.

*Fitzurse.* The King condemns your ex-  
communicating—

*Becket.* This is no secret, but a public  
matter.

In here again!

[*JOHN OF SALISBURY and MONKS return.*

Now, sirs, the King's commands!

*Fitzurse.* The King beyond the water,  
thro' our voices.

Commands you to be dutiful and leal

To your young King on this side of the  
water,

Not scorn him for the foibles of his youth.

What! you would make his coronation void  
By cursing those who crown'd him. Out  
upon you!

*Becket.* Reginald, all men know I loved  
the Prince.

His father gave him to my care, and I  
Became his second father: he had his faults,  
For which I would have laid mine own life  
down

To help him from them, since indeed I  
loved him,

And love him next after my lord his father.  
Rather than dim the splendour of his  
crown

I fain would treble and quadruple it  
With revenues, realms, and golden pro-  
vinces

So that were done in equity.

*Fitzurse.* You have broken

Your bond of peace, your treaty with the  
King—

Wakening such brawls and loud distur-  
bances

In England, that he calls you oversea

To answer for it in his Norman courts.

*Becket.* Prate not of bonds, for never, oh,  
never again

Shall the waste voice of the bond-breaking  
sea

Divide me from the mother church of  
England,

My Canterbury. Loud disturbances!

Oh, ay—the bells rang out even to  
deafening,

Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants and hymns

In all the churches, trumpets in the halls,

Sobs, laughter, cries: they spread their raiment down

Before me—would have made my path-way flowers,

Save that it was mid-winter in the street, ✓  
But full mid-summer in those honest hearts.

*Fitzurse.* The King commands you to absolve the bishops

Whom you have excommunicated.

*Becket.* I?

Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for absolution.

*Fitzurse.* But you advised the Pope.

*Becket.* And so I did.

They have but to submit.

*The four Knights.* The King commands you.

We are all King's men.

*Becket.* King's men at least should know

That their own King closed with me last July

That I should pass the censures of the Church

On those that crown'd young Henry in this realm,

And trampled on the rights of Canterbury.

*Fitzurse.* What! dare you charge the King with treachery?

*He* sanction thee to excommunicate

The prelates whom he chose to crown his son!

*Becket.* I spake no word of treachery, Reginald.

But for the truth of this I make appeal

To all the archbishops, bishops, prelates, barons,

Monks, knights, five hundred, that were there and heard.

Nay, you yourself were there: you heard yourself.

*Fitzurse.* I was not there.

*Becket.* I saw you there.

*Fitzurse.* I was not.

*Becket.* You were. I never forget anything.

*Fitzurse.* He makes the King a traitor, me a liar.

How long shall we forbear him?

*John of Salisbury* (*drawing BECKET aside*).  
O my good lord,

Speak with them privately on this here-after.

You see they have been revelling, and I fear

Are braced and brazen'd up with Christmas wines

For any murderous brawl.

*Becket.* And yet they prate Of mine, my brawls, when those, that name themselves

Of the King's part, have broken down our barns,

Wasted our diocese, outraged our tenants, Lifted our produce, driven our clerics

out—

Why they, your friends, those ruffians, the De Brocs,

They stood on Dover beach to murder me, They slew my stags in mine own manor here,

Mutilated, poor brute, my sumpter-mule, Plunder'd the vessel full of Gascon wine,

The old King's present, carried off the casks,

Kill'd half the crew, dungeon'd the other half

In Pevensey Castle—

*De Morville.* Why not rather then, If this be so, complain to your young King, Not punish of your own authority?

*Becket.* Mine enemies barr'd all access to the boy.

They knew he loved me.

I hugh, I hugh, how proudly you exalt your head!

Nay, when they seek to overturn our rights, I ask no leave of king, or mortal man,

To set them straight again. Alone I do it. Give to the King the things that are the

King's,

And those of God to God.

*Fitzurse.* Threats! threats! ye hear him.

What! will he excommunicate all the world?

[*The KNIGHTS come round BECKET.*]

- De Tracy.* He shall not.  
*De Brito.* Well, as yet—  
 I should be grateful—  
*He hath not excommunicated me.*  
*Becket.* Because thou wast *born* excommunicate.  
*I never spied in thee one gleam of grace.*  
*De Brito.* Your Christian's Christian charity!  
*Becket.* By St. Denis—  
*De Brito.* Ay, by St. Denis, now will he flame out,  
 And lose his head as old St. Denis did.  
*Becket.* Ye think to scare me from my loyalty  
 To God and to the Holy Father. No!  
 Tho' all the swords in England flash'd above me  
 Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours—  
 Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets upon earth  
 Blared from the heights of all the thrones of her kings,  
 Blowing the world against me, I would stand  
 Clothed with the full authority of Rome,  
 Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,  
 First of the foremost of their files, who die  
 For God, to people heaven in the great day  
 When God makes up his jewels. Once I fled—  
 Never again, and you—I marvel at you—  
 Ye know what is between us. Ye have sworn  
 Yourselves my men when I was Chancellor—  
 My vassals—and yet threaten your Archbishop  
 In his own house.  
*Knights.* Nothing can be between us  
 That goes against our fealty to the King.  
*Fitzurse.* And in his name we charge you  
 that ye keep  
 This traitor from escaping.  
*Becket.* Rest you easy,  
 For I am easy to keep. I shall not fly.  
 Here, here, here will you find me.  
*De Morville.* Know you not  
 You have spoken to the peril of your life?  
*Becket.* As I shall speak again.
- Fitzurse, De Tracy, and De Brito.* To arms!  
*[They rush out, DE MORVILLE lingers.]*  
*Becket.* De Morville,  
 I had thought so well of you; and even now  
 You seem the least assassin of the four.  
 Oh, do not damn yourself for company!  
 Is it too late for me to save your soul?  
 I pray you for one moment stay and speak.  
*De Morville.* Becket, it is too late. *[Exit.]*  
*Becket.* Is it too late?  
 Too late on earth may be too soon in hell.  
*Knights (in the distance).* Close the great gate—ho, there—upon the town.  
*Becket's Retainers.* Shut the hall-doors.  
*[A pause.]*  
*Becket.* You hear them, brother John;  
 Why do you stand so silent, brother John?  
*John of Salisbury.* For I was musing on  
 an ancient saw,  
*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re,*  
 Is strength less strong when hand-in-hand  
 with grace?  
*Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus.* Thomas,  
 Why should you heat yourself for such as  
 these?  
*Becket.* Methought I answer'd moderately enough.  
*John of Salisbury.* As one that blows the  
 coal to cool the fire.  
 My lord, I marvel why you never lean  
 On any man's advising but your own.  
*Becket.* Is it so, Dan John? well, what  
 should I have done?  
*John of Salisbury.* You should have taken  
 counsel with your friends  
 Before these bandits brake into your  
 presence.  
 They seek—you make—occasion for your  
 death.  
*Becket.* My counsel is already taken,  
 John.  
 I am prepared to die.  
*John of Salisbury.* We are sinners all,  
 The best of all not all-prepared to die.  
*Becket.* God's will be done!  
*John of Salisbury.* Ay, well.  
 God's will be done!  
*Grim (re-entering).* My lord, the knights  
 are arming in the garden  
 Beneath the sycamore.

*Becket.* Good! let them arm.  
*Grim.* And one of the De Brocs is with them, Robert,  
 The apostate monk that was with Randulf here.  
 He knows the twists and turnings of the place.

*Becket.* No fear!

*Grim.* No fear, my lord.

[*Crashes on the hall-doors. The MONKS flee.*]

*Becket (rising).* Our dovecote flown!  
 I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.

*John of Salisbury.* Take refuge in your own cathedral, Thomas.

*Becket.* Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day?

Valour and holy life should go together.  
 Why should all monks be cowards?

*John of Salisbury.* Are they so?  
 I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.

*Becket.* Ay, but I told them I would wait them here.

*Grim.* May they not say you dared not show yourself

In your old place? and vespers are beginning.

[*Bell rings for vespers till end of scene.*]  
 You should attend the office, give them heart.

They fear you slain: they dread they know not what.

*Becket.* Ay, monks, not men.

*Grim.* I am a monk, my lord.  
 Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us.  
 Some would stand by you to the death.

*Becket.* Your pardon.

*John of Salisbury.* He said, 'Attend the office.'

*Becket.* Attend the office?  
 Why then—The Cross!—who bears my Cross before me?

Methought they would have brain'd me with it, John. [GRIM takes it.

*Grim.* I! Would that I could bear thy cross indeed!

*Becket.* The Mitre!

*John of Salisbury.* Will you wear it?—there!

[BECKET puts on the mitre.

*Becket.*  
 I go to meet my King!

The Pall!

[*Puts on the pall.*]  
*Grim.* To meet the King?

[*Crashes on the doors as they go out.*]

*John of Salisbury.* Why do you move with such a stateliness?

Can you not hear them yonder like a storm,  
 Battering the doors, and breaking thro' the walls?

*Becket.* Why do the heathen rage? My two good friends,  
 What matters murder'd here, or murder'd there?

And yet my dream foretold my martyrdom  
 In mine own church. It is God's will.  
 Go on.

Nay, drag me not. We must not seem to fly.

## SCENE III

*North Transept of Canterbury Cathedral*

*On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle. Winter afternoon slowly darkening. Low thunder now and then of an approaching storm. MONKS heard chanting the service. ROSAMUND kneeling.*

*Rosamund.* O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict,—  
 These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces—

Thy holy follower founded Canterbury—  
 Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,

Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,

Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;

Save him till all as saintly as thyself  
 He miss the searching flame of purgatory,  
 And pass at once perfect to Paradise.

[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.*]  
 Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not here—  
 Not yet, thank heaven O save him!

[*Goes up steps leading to choir.*]  
*Becket (entering, forced along by John of Salisbury and Grim).* No, I tell you!

I cannot bear a hand upon my person,

# BECKET

## ACT V

Why do you force me thus against my will?

*Grim.* My lord, we force you from your enemies.

*Becket.* As you would force a king from being crown'd.

*John of Salisbury.* We must not force the crown of martyrdom.

[*Service stops. MONKS come down from the stairs that lead to the choir.*]

*Monks.* Here is the great Archbishop! He lives! he lives!

Die with him, and be glorified together.

*Becket.* Together? . . . get you back! go on with the office.

*Monks.* Come, then, with us to vespers.

*Becket.* How can I come When you so block the entry? Back, I say! Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven be served

Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the minster-bells,

And the great deeps were broken up again,  
And hiss'd against the sun?

[*Noise in the cloisters.*]

*Monks.* The murderers, hark! Let us hide! let us hide!

*Becket.* What do these people fear?

*Monks.* Those arm'd men in the cloister.

*Becket.* Be not such cravens! I will go out and meet them.

*Grim and others.* Shut the doors! We will not have him slain before our face.

[*They close the doors of the transept. Knocking.*]

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the doors!

[*Knocking.*]  
*Becket.* Why, these are our own monks who follow'd us!

And will you bolt them out, and have them slain?

Undo the doors: the church is not a castle: Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are you deaf?

What, have I lost authority among you? Stand by, make way!

[*Opens the doors. Enter MONKS from cloister.*]

Come in, my friends, come in! Nay, faster, faster!

*Monks.* Oh, my lord Archbishop, A score of knights all arm'd with swords and axes—

To the choir, to the choir!

[*MONKS divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bears BECKET along with them some way up the steps, where he is left standing alone.*]

*Becket.* Shall I too pass to the choir, And die upon the Patriarchal throne Of all my predecessors?

*John of Salisbury.* No, to the crypt! Twenty steps down. Stumble not in the darkness, Lest they should seize thee.

*Grim.* To the crypt? no—no, To the chapel of St. Blaise beneath the roof!

*John of Salisbury* (*pointing upward and downward*). That way, or this! Save thyself either way.

*Becket.* Oh, no, not either way, nor any way

Save by that way which leads thro' night to light.

Not twenty steps, but one.

And fear not I should stumble in the darkness,

Not tho' it be their hour, the power of darkness,

But my hour too, the power of light in darkness!

I am not in the darkness but the light, Seen by the Church in Heaven, the Church on earth—

The power of life in death to make her free!

[*Enter the four KNIGHTS. JOHN OF SALISBURY flies to the altar of St. Benedict.*]

*Fitzurse.* Here, here, King's men!

[*Catches hold of the last flying MONK.*]

Where is the traitor Becket?

*Monk.* I am not he! I am not he, my lord. I am not he indeed!

*Fitzurse.*

Hence to the fiend!

[*Pushes him away.*]

Where is this treble traitor to the King?

*De Tracy.* Where is the Archbishop, Thomas Becket?

## SCENE III

## BECKET

*Becket.* Here.  
No traitor to the King, but Priest of God,  
Primate of England.

*[Descending into the transept.*  
I am he ye seek.

What would ye have of me?

*Fitzurse.* Your life.

*De Tracy.* Your life.

*De Morville.* Save that you will absolve  
the bishops.

*Becket.* Never,—  
Except they make submission to the  
Church.

You had my answer to that cry before.

*De Morville.* Why, then you are a dead  
man; flee!

*Becket.* I will not.  
I am readier to be slain, than thou to  
slay.

Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a  
heart

To bathe this sacred pavement with my  
blood.

God pardon thee and these, but God's full  
curse

Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm  
One of my flock!

*Fitzurse.* Was not the great gate  
shut?

They are thronging in to vespers—half the  
town.

We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him and  
carry him!

Come with us—nay—thou art our prisoner  
—come!

*De Morville.* Ay, make him prisoner, do  
not harm the man.

*[FITZURSE lays hold of the ARCH-  
BISHOP'S pall.*

*Becket.* Touch me not!

*De Brito.* How the good  
priest gods himself!

He is not yet ascended to the Father.

*Fitzurse.* I will not only touch, but drag  
thee hence.

*Becket.* Thou art my man, thou art my  
vassal. Away!

*[Flings him off till he reels, almost to  
falling.*

*De Tracy* *(lays hold of the pall).* Come;  
as he said, thou art our prisoner.

*Becket.* Down!  
*[Throws him headlong.*

*Fitzurse* *(advances with drawn sword).*  
I told thee that I should remember  
thee!

*Becket.* Profligate pander!

*Fitzurse.* Do you hear that?  
strike, strike.

*[Strikes off the ARCHBISHOP'S mitre,  
and wounds him in the forehead.*

*Becket* *(covers his eyes with his hand).* I do  
commend my cause to God, the  
Virgin,  
St. Denis of France and St. Alphege of  
England,

And all the tutelar Saints of Canterbury.  
*[GRIM wraps his arms about the  
ARCHBISHOP.*

Spare this defence, dear brother.  
*[TRACY has arisen, and approaches,  
hesitatingly, with his sword raised.*

*Fitzurse.* Strike him, Tracy!

*Rosamund* *(rushing down steps from the  
choir).* No, No, No, No!

*Fitzurse.* This wanton here. De  
Morville,  
Hold her away.

*De Morville.* I hold her.

*Rosamund* *(held back by DE MORVILLE,  
and stretching out her arms).*

Mercy, mercy,  
As you would hope for mercy.

*Fitzurse.* Strike, I say.  
*Grim.* O God, O noble knights, O  
sacrilege!

Strike our Archbishop in his own cathe-  
dral!

The Pope, the King, will curse you—the  
whole world

Abhor you; ye will die the death of  
dogs!

Nay, nay, good Tracy. *[Lifts his arm.*  
*Fitzurse.* Answer not, but  
strike.

*De Tracy.* There is my answer then.  
*[Sword falls on GRIM'S arm, and  
glances from it, wounding BECKET.*

*Grim.* Mine arm is sever'd.  
I can no more—fight out the good fight—  
die

Conqueror.



# BECKET

ACT V

[*Staggers into the chapel of St. Benedict.*

*Becket (falling on his knees).* At the right hand of Power—

Power and great glory—for thy Church, O Lord—

Into Thy hands, O Lord—into Thy hands!— [Sinks prone.

*De Brito.* This last to rid thee of a world of brawls! (Kills him.)

The traitor's dead, and will arise no more.

*Fitzurse.* Nay, have we still'd him?

What! the great Archbishop!

Does he breathe? No?

*De Tracy.* No, Reginald, he is dead. [Storm bursts.<sup>1</sup>

*De Morville.* Will the earth gape and swallow us?

*De Brito.* The deed's done— Away!

[DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZURSE, *rush out, crying 'King's men!'* DE MORVILLE *follows slowly. Flashes of lightning thro' the Cathedral.* ROSAMUND *seen kneeling by the body of* BECKET.

<sup>1</sup> A tremendous thunderstorm actually broke over the Cathedral as the murderers were leaving it.

# THE CUP

## A TRAGEDY

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

#### GALATIANS

SYNORIX, an ex-Tetrarch.

SINNATUS, a Tetrarch.

Attendant.

Boy.

Maid.

PHQBÆ.

CAMMA, wife of Sinnatus, afterwards

Priestess in the Temple of Artemis.

#### ROMANS

ANTONIUS, a Roman General.

PUBLIUS.

Nobleman.

Messenger.

### ACT I

#### SCENE I

##### *Distant View of a City of Galatia*

*As the curtain rises, Priestesses are heard singing in the Temple. Boy discovered on a pathway among Rocks, picking grapes. A party of Roman Soldiers, guarding a prisoner in chains, come down the pathway and exeunt.*

*Enter SYNORIX (looking round). Singing ceases*

*Synorix.* Pine, beech and plane, oak, walnut, apricot,

Vine, cypress, poplar, myrtle, bowering-in  
The city where she dwells. She past me  
here

Three years ago when I was flying from  
My Tetrarchy to Rome. I almost touch'd  
her—

A maiden slowly moving on to music  
Among her maidens to this Temple—O  
Gods!

She is my fate—else wherefore has my fate  
Brought me again to her own city?—  
married

Since—married Sinnatus, the Tetrarch  
here—

But if he be conspirator, Rome will chain,  
Or slay him. I may trust to gain her then  
When I shall have my tetrarchy restored  
By Rome, our mistress, grateful that I  
show'd her

The weakness and the dissonance of our  
clans,  
And how to crush them easily. Wretched  
race!

And once I wish'd to scourge them to the  
bones.

But in this narrow breathing-time of life  
Is vengeance for its own sake worth the  
while,

If once our ends are gain'd? and now this  
cup—

I never felt such passion for a woman.

*[Brings out a cup and scroll from under his cloak.*

What have I written to her?

*[Reading the scroll.*

'To the admired Camma, wife of Sinnatus, the Tetrarch, one who years ago, himself an adorer of our great goddess, Artemis, beheld you afar off worshipping in her Temple, and loved you for it, sends you this cup rescued from the burning of one of her shrines in a city thro' which he past with the Roman army: it is the cup we use in our marriages. Receive it from one who cannot at present write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN  
THE ROMAN LEGION.'

*[Turns and looks up to Boy.*

Boy, dost thou know the house of Sinnatus?

*Boy.* These grapes are for the house of Sinnatus—

Close to the Temple.

# THE CUP

ACT I

*Synorix.* Yonder?  
*Boy.* Yes.  
*Synorix (aside).* That I  
 With all my range of women should yet  
 shun  
 To meet her face to face at once! My boy,  
*[Boy comes down rocks to him.*  
 Take thou this letter and this cup to  
 Camma,  
 The wife of Sinnatus.  
*Boy.* Going or gone to-day  
 To hunt with Sinnatus.  
*Synorix.* That matters not.  
 Take thou this cup and leave it at her doors.  
*[Gives the cup and scroll to the Boy.*  
*Boy.* I will, my lord.  
*[Takes his basket of grapes and exit.*

*Enter ANTONIUS*

*Antonius (meeting the Boy as he goes out).*  
 Why, whither runs the boy?  
 Is that the cup you rescued from the fire?  
*Synorix.* I send it to the wife of Sinnatus,  
 One half besotted in religious rites.  
 You come here with your soldiers to  
 enforce  
 The long-withholden tribute: you suspect  
 'This Sinnatus of playing patriotism,  
 Which in your sense is treason. You have  
 yet  
 No proof against him: now this pious cup  
 Is passport to their house, and open arms  
 To him who gave it; and once there I  
 warrant  
 I worm thro' all their windings.  
*Antonius.* If you prosper,  
 Our Senate, wearied of their tetrarchies,  
 Their quarrels with themselves, their  
 spite at Rome,  
 Is like enough to cancel them, and throne  
 One king above them all, who shall be true  
 To the Roman: and from what I heard in  
 Rome,  
 This tributary crown may fall to you.  
*Synorix.* The king, the crown! their talk  
 in Rome? is it so?  
*[ANTONIUS nods.*  
 Well—I shall serve Galatia taking it,  
 And save her from herself, and be to Rome  
 More faithful than a Roman.

*[Turns and sees CAMMA coming.*  
 Stand aside,  
 Stand aside; here she comes!  
*[Watching CAMMA as she enters with her Maid.*  
*Camma (to Maid).* Where is he, girl?  
*Maid.* You know the waterfall  
 That in the summer keeps the mountain  
 side,  
 But after rain o'erleaps a jutting rock  
 And shoots three hundred feet.  
*Camma.* The stag is there?  
*Maid.* Seen in the thicket at the bottom  
 there  
 But yester-even.  
*Camma.* Good then, we will climb  
 The mountain opposite and watch the  
 chase.  
*[They descend the rocks and exeunt.*  
*Synorix (watching her).* *(Aside.)* The bust  
 of Juno and the brows and eyes  
 Of Venus; face and form unmatchable!  
*Antonius.* Why do you look at her so  
 lingeringly?  
*Synorix.* To see if years have changed  
 her.  
*Antonius (sarcastically).* Love her, do  
 you?  
*Synorix.* I envied Sinnatus when he  
 married her.  
*Antonius.* She knows it? Ha!  
*Synorix.* She—no, nor ev'n my face.  
*Antonius.* Nor Sinnatus either?  
*Synorix.* No, nor Sinnatus.  
*Antonius.* Hot-blooded! I have heard  
 them say in Rome,  
 That your own people cast you from their  
 bounds,  
 For some unprincipled violence to a woman,  
 As Rome did Tarquin.  
*Synorix.* Well, if this were so  
 I here return like Tarquin—for a crown.  
*Antonius.* And may be foil'd like Tar-  
 quin, if you follow  
 Not the dry light of Rome's straight-going  
 policy,  
 But the fool-fire of love or lust, which well  
 May make you lose yourself, may even  
 drown you  
 In the good regard of Rome.  
*Synorix.* Tut—fear me not;

## SCENE I

## THE CUP

I ever had my victories among women.  
I am most true to Rome.

*Antonius (aside).* I hate the man!  
What filthy tools our Senate works with!  
Still

I must obey them. (*Aloud.*) Fare you well.  
[*Going.*]

*Synorix.* Farewell!

*Antonius (stopping).* A moment! If you  
track this Sinnatus

In any treason, I give you here an order

[*Produces a paper.*]  
To seize upon him. Let me sign it. (*Signs*  
*it.*) There

'Antonius leader of the Roman Legion.'  
[*Hands the paper to SYNORIX. Goes*  
*up pathway and exit.*]

*Synorix.* Woman again!—but I am wiser  
now.  
No rushing on the game—the net,—the  
net.

[*Shouts of "Sinnatus! Sinnatus!"*

[*Then horn.*]  
*Looking off stage.*] He comes, a rough,  
bluff, simple-looking fellow.

If we may judge the kernel by the husk,  
Not one to keep a woman's fealty when  
Assailed by Craft and Love. I'll join with  
him:

I may reap something from him—come  
upon *her*

Again, perhaps, to-day—*her*. Who are with  
him?

I see no face that knows me. Shall I risk it?  
I am a Roman now, they dare not touch me.  
I will.

*Enter SINNATUS, HUNSMEN and hounds*

Fair Sir, a happy day to you!  
You reck but little of the Roman here,  
While you can take your pastime in the  
woods.

*Sinnatus.* Ay, ay, why not? What would  
you with me, man?

*Synorix.* I am a life-long lover of the  
chase,

And tho' a stranger fain would be allow'd  
To join the hunt.

*Sinnatus.* Your name?

*Synorix.* Strato, my name.

*Sinnatus.* No Roman name?

*Synorix.* A Greek, my lord; you know

That we Galatians are both Greek and  
Gaul.

[*Shouts and horns in the distance.*]

*Sinnatus.* Hillo, the stag! (*To SYNORIX.*)

What, you are all unfurnish'd?

Give him a bow and arrows—follow—  
follow.

[*Exit, followed by HUNSMEN.*]

*Synorix.* Slowly but surely—till I see  
my way.

It is the one step in the dark beyond  
Our expectation, that amazes us.

[*Distant shouts and horns.*]

Hillo! Hillo!

[*Exit SYNORIX. Shouts and horns.*]

## SCENE II

*A Room in the Tetrarch's House*

*Frescoed figures on the walls. Evening.*  
*Moonlight outside. A couch with cushions*  
*on it. A small table with a flagon of wine,*  
*cups, plate of grapes, etc., also the cup of*  
*Scene I. A chair with drapery on it.*

*CAMMA enters, and opens curtains of*  
*window*

*Camma.* No Sinnatus yet—and there  
the rising moon.

[*Takes up a cithern and sits on*  
*couch. Plays and sings.*]

Moon on the field and the foam,  
Moon on the waste and the wold,  
Moon bring him home, bring him home  
Safe from the dark and the cold,  
Home, sweet moon, bring him home,  
Home with the flock to the fold—  
Safe from the wolf—

(*Listening.*) Is he coming? I thought I  
heard

A footstep. No not yet. They say that  
Rome

Sprang from a wolf. I fear my dear lord  
mixt

With some conspiracy against the wolf.

This mountain shepherd never dream'd of  
Rome.

(*Sings.*) Safe from the wolf to the fold—  
And that great break of precipice that runs

Thro' all the wood, where twenty years  
ago

Huntsman, and hound, and deer were all  
neck-broken!

Nay, here he comes.

*Enter SINNATUS followed by SYNORIX*

*Sinnatus (angrily).* I tell thee, my good  
fellow,

*My arrow struck the stag.*

*Synorix.* But was it so?

Nay, you were further off: besides the  
wind

Went with *my* arrow.

*Sinnatus.* I am sure *I* struck him.

*Synorix.* And I am just as sure, my lord,  
*I* struck him.

*(Aside.)* And I may strike your game when  
you are gone.

*Camma.* Come, come, we will not  
quarrel about the stag.

I have had a weary day in watching you.

Yours must have been a wearier. Sit and  
eat,

And take a hunter's vengeance on the  
meats.

*Sinnatus.* No, no—we have eaten—we  
are heated. Wine!

*Camma.* Who is our guest?

*Sinnatus.* Strato he calls himself.

[*CAMMA offers wine to SYNORIX, while  
SINNATUS helps himself.*]

*Sinnatus.* I pledge you, Strato.

[*Drinks.*]

*Synorix.* And I you, my lord.

[*Drinks.*]

*Sinnatus (seeing the cup sent to CAMMA).*  
What's here?

*Camma.* A strange gift sent to me  
to-day.

A sacred cup saved from a blazing shrine  
Of our great Goddess, in some city where  
Antoni<sup>us</sup> past. I had believed that Rome  
Made war upon the peoples not the Gods.

*Synorix.* Most like the city rose against  
Antoni<sup>us</sup>,

Whereon he fired it, and the sacred shrine  
By chance was burnt along with it.

*Sinnatus.* Had you then

No message with the cup?

*Camma.* Why, yes, see here.

[*Gives him the scroll.*]

*Sinnatus (reads).* 'To the admired

Camma,—beheld you afar off—loved you  
—sends you this cup—the cup we use in  
our marriages—cannot at present write  
himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN THE  
ROMAN LEGION.'

Serving by force! Were there no boughs to  
hang on,

Rivers to drown in? Serve by force? No  
force

Could make me serve by force.

*Synorix.* How then, my lord?

The Roman is encampt without your  
city—

The force of Rome a thousand-fold our  
own.

Must all Galatia hang or drown herself?

And you a Prince and Tetrarch in this  
province—

*Sinnatus.* Province!

*Synorix.* Well, well, they call  
it so in Rome.

*Sinnatus (angrily).* Province!

*Synorix.* A noble anger! but Antoni<sup>us</sup>  
To-morrow will demand your tribute—  
you,

Can you make war? Have you alliances?  
Bithynia, Pontus, Paphlagonia?

We have had our leagues of old with  
Eastern kings.

There is my hand—if such a league there  
be.

What will you do?

*Sinnatus.* Not set myself abroad

And run my mind out to a random guest  
Who join'd me in the hunt. You saw my  
hounds

True to the scent; and we have two-legg'd  
dogs

Among us who can smell a true occasion,  
And when to bark and how.

*Synorix.* My good Lord Sinnatus,

I once was at the hunting of a lion.

Roused by the clamour of the chase he  
woke,

Came to the front of the wood—his  
monarch mane

Bristled about his quick ears—he stood  
there

Staring upon the hunter. A score of dogs  
Gnaw'd at his ankles: at the last he felt

The trouble of his feet, put forth one paw,  
Slew four, and knew it not, and so remain'd  
Staring upon the hunter: and this Rome  
Will crush you if you wrestle with her;  
then

Save for some slight report in her own  
Senate

Scarce know what she has done.

(*Aside.*) Would I could move him,  
Provoke him any way! (*Aloud.*) The Lady  
Camma,

Wise I am sure as she is beautiful,  
Will close with me that to submit at once  
Is better than a wholly-hopeless war,  
Our gallant citizens murder'd all in vain,  
Son, husband, brother gash'd to death in  
vain,

And the small state more cruelly trampled  
on

Than had she never moved.

Camma. Sir, I had once  
A boy who died a babe; but were he living  
And grown to man and Sinnatus will'd  
it, I

Would set him in the front rank of the fight  
With scarce a pang. (*Rises.*) Sir, if a state  
submit

At once, she may be blotted out at once  
And swallow'd in the conqueror's chronicle.  
Whereas in wars of freedom and defence  
The glory and grief of battle won or lost  
Solders a race together—yea—tho' they  
fail,

The names of those who fought and fell  
are like

A bank'd-up fire that flashes out again  
From century to century, and at last  
May lead them on to victory—I hope so—  
Like phantoms of the Gods.

Sinnatus. Well spoken, wife.

Synorix (*bowing*). Madam, so well I  
yield.

Sinnatus. I should not wonder  
If Synorix, who has dwelt three years in  
Rome

And wrought his worst against his native  
land,

Returns with this Antonius.

Synorix. What is Synorix?

Sinnatus. Galatian, and not know? This  
Synorix

Was Tetrarch here, and tyrant also—did  
Dishonour to our wives.

Synorix. Perhaps you judge him  
With feeble charity: being as you tell me  
Tetrarch, there might be willing wives  
enough

To feel dishonour, honour.

Camma. Do not say so.  
I know of no such wives in all Galatia.

There may be courtesans for aught I know  
Whose life is one dishonour.

*Enter ATTENDANT*

Attendant (*aside*). My lord, the men!

Sinnatus (*aside*). Our anti-Roman fac-  
tion?

Attendant (*aside*). Ay, my lord.

Synorix (*overhearing*). (*Aside.*) I have  
enough—their anti-Roman faction.

Sinnatus (*aloud*). Some friends of mine  
would speak with me without.

You, Strato, make good cheer till I return.

[*Exit.*]

Synorix. I have much to say, no time to  
say it in.

First, lady, know myself am that Galatian  
Who sent the cup.

Camma. I thank you from my heart.

Synorix. Then that I serve with Rome  
to serve Galatia.

That is my secret: keep it, or you sell me  
To torment and to death. [*Coming closer.*]

For your ear only—  
I love you—for your love to the great  
Goddess.

The Romans sent me here a spy upon you,  
To draw you and your husband to your  
doom.

I'd sooner die than do it.

[*Takes out paper given him by ANTONIUS.*]

This paper sign'd  
Antonius—will you take it, read it? there!

Camma. (*Reads.*) 'You are to seize on  
Sinnatus,—if—'

Synorix. (*Snatches paper.*) No more.

What follows is for no wife's eyes. O

Camma,  
Rome has a glimpse of this conspiracy;  
Rome never yet hath spar'd conspirator.  
Horrible! faying, scourging, crucify-  
ing—

**Camma.** I am tender enough. Why do you practise on me?

**Synorix.** Why should I practise on you?

How you wrong me!

I am sure of being every way malign'd.  
And if you should betray me to your husband—

**Camma.** Will you betray him by this order?

**Synorix.** See,  
I tear it all to pieces, never dream'd  
Of acting on it. [*Tears the paper.*]

**Camma.** I owe you thanks for ever.

**Synorix.** Hath Sinnatus never told you of this plot?

**Camma.** What plot?

**Synorix.** A child's sand-castle on the beach  
For the next wave—all seen,—all calculated,  
All known by Rome. No chance for Sinnatus.

**Camma.** Why said you not as much to my brave Sinnatus?

**Synorix.** Brave—ay—too brave, too over-confident,

Too like to ruin himself, and you, and me!

Who else, with this black thunderbolt of Rome

Above him, would have chased the stag to-day

In the full face of all the Roman camp?

A miracle that they let him home again,  
Not caught, maim'd, blinded him.

[*CAMMA shudders.*]

(*Aside.*) I have made her tremble.  
(*Aloud.*) I know they mean to torture him to death.

I dare not tell him how I came to know it;  
I durst not trust him with—my serving Rome

To serve Galatia: you heard him on the letter.

Not say as much? I all but said as much.  
I am sure I told him that his plot was folly.  
I say it to you—you are wiser—Rome knows all,

But you know not the savagery of Rome.

**Camma.** O—have you power with Rome? use it for him!

**Synorix.** Alas! I have no such power with Rome. All that  
Lies with Antonius.

[*As if struck by a sudden thought.*  
*Comes over to her.*]

He will pass to-morrow  
In the gray dawn before the Temple doors.  
You have beauty,—O great beauty,—and Antonius,

So gracious toward women, never yet  
Flung back a woman's prayer. Plead to him,  
I am sure you will prevail.

**Camma.** Still—I should tell  
My husband.

**Synorix.** Will he let you plead for him.  
To a Roman?

**Camma.** I fear not.

**Synorix.** Then do not tell him.  
Or tell him, if you will, when you return,  
When you have charm'd our general into mercy,

And all is safe again. O dearest lady,  
[*Murmurs of 'Synorix! Synorix!' heard outside.*]

Think,—torture,—death,—and come.

**Camma.** I will, I will.  
And I will not betray you.

**Synorix** (*aside*). (*As SINNATUS enters.*)  
Stand apart.

*Enter SINNATUS and ATTENDANT*

**Sinnatus.** Thou art that Synorix! One  
whom thou hast wrong'd  
Without there, knew thee with Antonius.  
They howl for thee, to rend thee head from limb.

**Synorix.** I am much malign'd. I thought  
to serve Galatia.

**Sinnatus.** Serve thyself first, villain!  
They shall not harm

My guest within my house. There! (*points to door*) there! this door

Opens upon the forest! Out, begone!  
Henceforth I am thy mortal enemy.

**Synorix.** However I thank thee (*draws his sword*); thou hast saved my life.

[*Exit.*]

**Sinnatus.** (*To ATTENDANT.*) Return and  
tell them Synorix is not here.

[*Exit ATTENDANT.*]

What did that villain Synorix say to you?

*Camma.* Is he—that—Synorix?

*Sinnatus.* Wherefore should you doubt it?

One of the men there knew him.

*Camma.* Only one, And he perhaps mistaken in the face.

*Sinnatus.* Come, come, could he deny it?

What did he say?

*Camma.* What should he say?

*Sinnatus.* What should he say, my wife!

He should say this, that being Tetrarch once

His own true people cast him from their doors

Like a base coin.

*Camma.* Not kindly to them?

*Sinnatus.* Kindly?

O the most kindly Prince in all the world! Would clap his honest citizens on the back, Bandy their own rude jests with them, be curious

About the welfare of their babes, their wives,

O ay—their wives—their wives. What should he say?

He should say nothing to my wife if I Were by to throttle him! He steep'd himself

In all the lust of Rome. How should you guess

What manner of beast it is?

*Camma.* Yet he seem'd kindly, And said he loathed the cruelties that Rome Wrought on her vassals.

*Sinnatus.* Did he, honest man?

*Camma.* And you, that seldom brook the stranger here,

Have let him hunt the stag with you to-day.

*Sinnatus.* I warrant you now, he said he struck the stag.

*Camma.* Why no, he never touch'd upon the stag.

*Sinnatus.* Why so I said, my arrow. Well to sleep. [*Goes to close door.*]

*Camma.* Nay, close not yet the door upon a night

That looks half day.

*Sinnatus.* True, and my friends may spy him

And slay him as he runs.

*Camma.* He is gone already.

Oh look,—yon grove upon the mountain, —white

In the sweet moon as with a lovelier snow! But what a blotch of blackness underneath!

*Sinnatus.* you remember—yea, you must, That there three years ago—the vast vine-bowers

Ran to the summit of the trees, and dropt Their streamers earthward, which a breeze of May

Took ever and anon, and open'd out The purple zone of hill and heaven; there You told your love; and like the swaying vines—

Yea,—with our eyes,—our hearts, our prophet hopes

Let in the happy distance, and that all But cloudless heaven which we have found together

In our three married years! You kiss'd me there

For the first time. *Sinnatus.* kiss me now.

*Sinnatus.* First kiss. [*Kisses her.*] There then. You talk almost as if it

Might be the last.

*Camma.* Will you not eat a little?

*Sinnatus.* No, no, we found a goatherd's hut and shared

His fruits and milk. Liar! You will believe Now that he never struck the stag—a brave one

Which you shall see to-morrow.

*Camma.* I rise to-morrow

In the gray dawn, and take this holy cup To lodge it in the shrine of Artemis.

*Sinnatus.* Good!

*Camma.* If I be not back in half an hour,

Come after me.

*Sinnatus.* What! is there danger?

*Camma.* Nay, None that I know: 'tis but a step from here To the Temple.

*Sinnatus.* All my brain is full of sleep. Wake me before you go, I'll after you—

After me now! [*Closes door and exit.*]

*Camma* [*drawing curtains*]. Your shadow. *Synorix—*

His face was not malignant, and he said



That men malign'd him. Shall I go? Shall I go?

Death, torture—

'He never yet flung back a woman's prayer'—

I go, but I will have my dagger with me. [Exit.

## SCENE III

*Same as Scene I. Dawn*

*Music and Singing in the Temple*

*Enter SYNORIX watchfully, after him*

PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS

Synorix. Publius!

Publius. Here!

Synorix. Do you remember what I told you?

Publius. When you cry 'Rome, Rome,' to seize

On whomsoever may be talking with you, Or man, or woman, as traitors unto Rome.

Synorix. Right. Back again. How many of you are there?

Publius. Some half a score.

[*Exeunt SOLDIERS and PUBLIUS.*

Synorix. I have my guard about me.

I need not fear the crowd that hunted me Across the woods, last night. I hardly gain'd

The camp at midnight. Will she come to me

Now that she knows me Synorix? Not if Sennatus

Has told her all the truth about me. Well, I cannot help the mould that I was cast in. I fling all that upon my fate, my star. I know that I am genial, I would be Happy, and make all others happy so They did not thwart me. Nay, she will not come.

Yet if she be a true and loving wife She may, perchance, to save this husband. Ay!

See, see, my white bird stepping toward the snare.

Why now I count it all but miracle, That this brave heart of mine should shake me so,

As helplessly as some unbearded boy's When first he meets his maiden in a bower.

[*Enter CAMMA (with cup).*

The lark first takes the sunlight on his wing,

But you, twin sister of the morning star, Forelead the sun.

Camma. Where is Antonius?

Synorix. Not here as yet. You are too early for him.

[*She crosses towards Temple.*

Synorix. Nay, whither go you now?

Camma. To lodge this cup

Within the holy shrine of Artemis,

And so return.

Synorix. To find Antonius here.

[*She goes into the Temple, he looks after her.*

The loveliest life that ever drew the light From heaven to brood upon her, and enrich

Earth with her shadow! I trust she will return.

These Romans dare not violate the Temple.

No, I must lure my game into the camp.

A woman I could live and die for. What!

Die for a woman, what new faith is this?

I am not mad, not sick, not old enough

To doat on one alone. Yes, mad for her,

Camma the stately, Camma the great-hearted,

So mad, I fear some strange and evil chance

Coming upon me, for by the Gods I seem Strange to myself.

*Re-enter CAMMA*

Camma. Where is Antonius?

Synorix. Where? As I said before, you are still too early.

Camma. Too early to be here alone with thee;

For whether men malign thy name, or no, It bears an evil savour among women.

Where is Antonius? (*Loud.*)

Synorix. Madam, as you know

The camp is half a league without the city; If you will walk with me we needs must meet

Antonius coming, or at least shall find him There in the camp.

*Camma.* No, not one step with thee.  
Where is Antonius? (*Louder.*)

*Synorix (advancing towards her).*

Then for your own sake,  
Lady, I say it with all gentleness,  
And for the sake of Sinnatus your husband,  
I must compel you.

*Camma (drawing her dagger).* Stay!—too  
near is death.

*Synorix (disarming her).* Is it not easy to  
disarm a woman?

*Enter SINNATUS (seizes him from behind by  
the throat)*

*Synorix (throttled and scarce audible).*  
Rome! Rome!

*Sinnatus.* Adulterous dog!

*Synorix (stabbing him with CAMMA's  
dagger).* What! will you have it?

[*CAMMA utters a cry and runs to  
SINNATUS.*

*Sinnatus (falls backward).* I have it in  
my heart—to the Temple—fly—  
For my sake—or they seize on thee.  
Remember!

Away—farewell! [*Dies.*  
*Camma (runs up the steps into the Temple,  
looking back).* Farewell!

*Synorix (seeing her escape).* The women  
of the Temple drag her in.

Publius! Publius! No,  
Antonius would not suffer me to break  
Into the sanctuary. She hath escaped.

[*Looking down at SINNATUS.*  
‘Adulterous dog!’ that red-faced rage at me!  
Then with one quick short stab—eternal  
peace.

So end all passions. Then what use in  
passions?

To warm the cold bounds of our dying life  
And, lest we freeze in mortal apathy,  
Employ us, heat us, quicken us, help us,  
keep us

From seeing all too near that urn, those  
ashes

Which all must be. Well used, they serve  
us well.

I heard a saying in Egypt, that ambition  
Is like the sea wave, which the more you  
drink,

The more you thirst—yea—drink too  
much, as men

Have done on rafts of wreck—it drives  
you mad.

I will be no such wreck, am no such  
gamester

As, having won the stake, would dare the  
chance

Of double, or losing all. The Roman  
Senate,

For I have always play'd into their hands,  
Means me the crown. And Camma for my  
bride—

The people love her—if I win her love,  
They too will cleave to me, as one with her.  
There then I rest, Rome's tributary king.

[*Looking down on SINNATUS.*

Why did I strike him?—having proof  
enough

Against the man, I surely should have left  
That stroke to Rome. He saved my life too.

Did he?

It seem'd so. I have play'd the sudden fool.  
And that sets her against me—for the  
moment.

Camma—well, well, I never found the  
woman

I could not force or wheedle to my will.  
She will be glad at last to wear my crown.  
And I will make Galatia prosperous too,  
And we will chirp among our vines, and  
smile

At bygone things till that (*pointing to  
SINNATUS*) eternal peace.

Rome! Rome!

[*Enter PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.*

Twice I cried Rome. Why came ye not  
before?

*Publius.* Why come we now? Whom  
shall we seize upon?

*Synorix (pointing to the body of SINNATUS).*  
The body of that dead traitor Sinnatus.  
Bear him away.

*Music and Singing in Temple.*

## ACT II

### SCENE

#### *Interior of the Temple of Artemis*

*Small gold gates on platform in front of the  
veil before the colossal statue of the God-  
dess, and in the centre of the Temple a*

*tripod altar, on which is a lighted lamp. Lamps (lighted) suspended between each pillar. Tripods, vases, garlands of flowers, etc., about stage. Altar at back close to Goddess, with two cups. Solemn music. Priestesses decorating the Temple.*

*(The Chorus of PRIESTESSES sing as they enter.)*

Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother, hear us, and bless us!

Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to the wave, to the glebe, to the fire!

Hear thy people who praise thee! O help us from all that oppress us!

Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O yield them all their desire!

*Priestess.* Phæbe, that man from Synorix, who has been

So oft to see the Priestess, waits once more Before the Temple.

*Phæbe.* We will let her know.  
*[Signs to one of the Priestesses, who goes out.]*

Since Camma fled from Synorix to our Temple,

And for her beauty, stateliness, and power, Was chosen Priestess here, have you not mark'd

Her eyes were ever on the marble floor? To-day they are fixt and bright—they look straight out.

Hath she made up her mind to marry him? *Priestess.* To marry him who stabb'd her Sinnatus.

You will not easily make me credit that. *Phæbe.* Ask her.

*Phæbe.* Ask her.

*Enter CAMMA as Priestess (in front of the curtains)*

*Priestess.* You will not marry Synorix?

*Camma.* My girl, I am the bride of Death, and only

Marry the dead.

*Priestess.* Not Synorix then?

*Camma.* My girl,

At times this oracle of great Artemis

Has no more power than other oracles

To speak directly.

*Phæbe.* Will you speak to him,

The messenger from Synorix who waits Before the Temple?

*Camma.* Why not? Let him enter.

*[Comes forward on to step by tripod.]*

*Enter a MESSENGER*

*Messenger (kneels).* Greeting and health from Synorix! More than once

You have refused his hand. When last I saw you,

You all but yielded. He entreats you now For your last answer. When he struck at Sinnatus—

As I have many a time declared to you— He knew not at the moment who had fasten'd

About his throat—he begs you to forget it As scarce his act—a random stroke: all else

Was love for you: he prays you to believe him.

*Camma.* I pray him to believe—that I believe him.

*Messenger.* Why that is well. You mean to marry him?

*Camma.* I mean to marry him—if that be well.

*Messenger.* This very day the Romans crown him king

For all his faithful services to Rome. He wills you then this day to marry him,

And so be throned together in the sight Of all the people, that the world may know

You twain are reconciled, and no more feuds

Disturb our peaceful vassalage to Rome.

*Camma.* To-day? Too sudden. I will brood upon it.

When do they crown him?

*Messenger.* Even now.

*Camma.* And where?

*Messenger.* Here by your temple.

*Camma.* Come once more to me Before the crowning,—I will answer you.

*[Exit MESSENGER.]*

*Phæbe.* Great Artemis! O Camma, can it be well,

Or good, or wise, that you should clasp a hand

Red with the sacred blood of Sinnatus?

*Camma.* Good! mine own dagger driven  
by Synorix found  
All good in the true heart of Sinnatus,  
And quench'd it there for ever. Wise!  
Life yields to death and wisdom bows to  
Fate,  
Is wisest, doing so. Did not this man  
Speak well? We cannot fight imperial  
Rome,  
But he and I are both Galatian-born,  
And tributary sovereigns, he and I  
Might teach this Rome—from knowledge  
of our people—  
Where to lay on her tribute—heavily here  
And lightly there. Might I not live for  
that,  
And drown all poor self-passion in the  
sense  
Of public good?

*Phæbe.* I am sure you will not  
marry him.

*Camma.* Are you so sure? I pray you  
wait and see.

[*Shouts (from the distance),  
'Synorix! Synorix!'*]

*Camma.* Synorix, Synorix! So they cried  
Sinnatus  
Not so long since—they sicken me. The  
One

Who shifts his policy suffers something,  
must  
Accuse himself, excuse himself; the Many  
Will feel no shame to give themselves the  
lie.

*Phæbe.* Most like it was the Roman  
soldier shouted.

*Camma.* Their shield-borne patriot of  
the morning star  
Hang'd at mid-day, their traitor of the  
dawn  
The clamour'd darling of their afternoon!  
And that same head they would have  
play'd at ball with  
And kick'd it featureless—they now would  
crown. [*Flourish of trumpets.*]

*Enter a Galatian NOBLEMAN with crown on  
a cushion*

*Noble (kneels).* Greeting and health from  
Synorix. He sends you  
This diadem of the first Galatian Queen,

That you may feed your fancy on the  
glory of it,  
And join your life this day with his, and  
wear it

Beside him on his throne. He waits your  
answer.

*Camma.* Tell him there is one shadow  
among the shadows,

One ghost of all the ghosts—as yet so new,  
So strange among them—such an alien  
there,

So much of husband in it still—that if  
The shout of Synorix and Camma sitting  
Upon one throne, should reach it, it would  
rise

*He!* . . . He, with that red star between the  
ribs,

And my knife there—and blast the king  
and me,

And blanch the crowd with horror. I dare  
not, sir!

Throne him—and then the marriage—ay  
and tell him

That I accept the diadem of Galatia—  
[*All are amazed.*]

Yea, that ye saw me crown myself withal.  
[*Puts on the crown.*]

I wait him his crown'd queen.

*Noble.* So will I tell him. [*Exit.*]

*Music.* Two Priestesses go up the steps before  
the shrine, draw the curtains on either side  
(discovering the Goddess), then open the  
gates and remain on steps, one on either  
side, and kneel. A priestess goes off and  
returns with a veil of marriage, then assists  
Phæbe to veil Camma. At the same time  
Priestesses enter and stand on either side  
of the Temple. Camma and all the  
Priestesses kneel, raise their hands to the  
Goddess, and bow down.

[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!' All rise.*]

*Camma.* Fling wide the doors and let  
the new-made children  
Of our imperial mother see the show.

[*Sunlight pours through the doors.*]  
I have no heart to do it. (*To PHÆBE.*)  
Look for me!

[*Crouches. PHÆBE looks out.*  
[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]

*Phæbe.* He climbs the throne. Hot blood,  
ambition, pride  
So bloat and redden his face—O would it  
were

His third last apoplexy! O bestial!

O how unlike our goodly Sinnatus.

*Camma* (*on the ground*). You wrong him  
surely; far as the face goes

A goodlier-looking man than Sinnatus.

*Phæbe* (*aside*). How dare she say it? I  
could hate her for it  
But that she is distracted.

[*A flourish of trumpets.*]

*Camma.* Is he crown'd?

*Phæbe.* Ay, there they crown him.

[*Crowd without shout, 'Synorix!  
Synorix!'*]

[*A Priestess brings a box of spices to  
CAMMA, who throws them on the  
altar-flame.*]

*Camma.* Rouse the dead altar-flame,  
fling in the spices,

Nard, Cinnamon, amomum, benzoin.

Let all the air reel into a mist of odour,

As in the midmost heart of Paradise.

Lay down the Lydian carpets for the king.

The king should pace on purple to his  
bride,

And music there to greet my lord the king.

[*Musc.*]

(*To PHÆBE*). Dost thou remember when  
I wedded Sinnatus?

Ay, thou wast there—whether from maiden  
fears

Or reverential love for him I loved,

Or some strange second-sight, the mar-  
riage cup

Wherefrom we make libation to the  
Goddess

So shook within my hand, that the red  
wine

Ran down the marble and lookt like blood,  
like blood.

*Phæbe.* I do remember your first-  
marriage fears.

*Camma.* I have no fears at this my  
second marriage.

See here—I stretch my hand out—hold it  
there.

How steady it is!

*Phæbe.* Steady enough to stab him!

*Camma.* O hush! O peace! This violence  
ill becomes

The silence of our Temple. Gentleness,  
Low words best chime with this solemnity.

*Enter a procession of Priestesses and Children  
bearing garlands and golden goblets, and  
strewing flowers.*

*Enter SYNORIX* (*as King, with gold laurel-  
wreath crown and purple robes*), followed  
by ANTONIUS, PUBLIUS, Noblemen, Guards,  
and the Populace.

*Camma.* Hail, King!

*Synorix.*

Hail, Queen!

The wheel of Fate has roll'd me to the top.  
I would that happiness were gold, that I  
Might cast my largess of it to the crowd!  
I would that every man made feast to-day  
Beneath the shadow of our pines and  
planes!

For all my truer life begins to-day.

The past is like a travell'd land now sunk

Below the horizon—like a barren shore

That grew salt weeds, but now all drown'd  
in love

And glittering at full tide—the bounteous  
bays

And havens filling with a blissful sea.

Nor speak I now too mightily, being King

And happy! happiest, Lady, in my power  
To make you happy.

*Camma.* Yes, sir.

*Synorix.* Our Antonius,  
Our faithful friend of Rome, tho' Rome  
may set

A free foot where she will, yet of his  
courtesy

Entreats he may be present at our marriage.

*Camma.* Let him come—a legion with  
him, if he will.

(*To ANTONIUS.*) Welcome, my lord An-  
tonius, to our Temple.

(*To SYNORIX.*) You on this side the altar.

(*To ANTONIUS.*) You on that.

Call first upon the Goddess, Synorix.

[*All face the Goddess. Priestesses,  
Children, Populace, and Guards kneel  
—the others remain standing.*]

*Synorix.* O Thou, that dost inspire the  
germ with life,

The child, a thread within the house of birth,

And give him limbs, then air, and send him forth

The glory of his father—Thou whose breath

Is balmy wind to robe our hills with grass,  
And kindle all our vales with myrtle-blossom,

And roll the golden oceans of our grain,  
And sway the long grape-bunches of our vines,

And fill all hearts with fatness and the lust  
Of plenty—make me happy in my marriage!

*Chorus (chanting).* Artemis, Artemis,  
hear him, Ionian Artemis!

*Camma.* O Thou that slayest the babe  
within the womb

Or in the being born, or after slayest him  
As boy or man, great Goddess, whose  
storm-voice

Unsockets the strong oak, and rears his  
root

Beyond his head, and strows our fruits,  
and lays

Our golden grain, and runs to sea and  
makes it

Foam over all the fleeted wealth of kings  
And peoples, hear.

Whose arrow is the plague—whose quick  
flash splits

The mid-sea mast, and rifts the tower to  
the rock,

And hurls the victor's column down with  
him

That crouns it, hear.

Who causest the safe earth to shudder and  
gape,

And gulf and flatten in her closing chasm  
Domed cities, hear.

Whose lava-torrents blast and blacken a  
province

To a cinder, hear.

Whose winter-cataracts find a realm and  
leave it

A waste of rock and ruin, hear. I call thee  
To make my marriage prosper to my  
wish!

*Chorus.* Artemis, Artemis, hear her,  
Ephesian Artemis!

*Camma.* Artemis, Artemis, hear me,  
Galatian Artemis!

I call on our own Goddess in our own  
Temple.

*Chorus.* Artemis, Artemis, hear her,  
Galatian Artemis!

[*Thunder. All rise.*]

*Synorix (aside).* Thunder! Ay, ay, the  
storm was drawing hither

Across the hills when I was being crown'd.  
I wonder if I look as pale as she?

*Camma.* Art thou—still bent—on marry-  
ing?

*Synorix.* Surely—yet  
These are strange words to speak to  
Artemis.

*Camma.* Words are not always what they  
seem, my King.

I will be faithful to thee till thou die.

*Synorix.* I thank thee, Camma,—I thank  
thee.

*Camma (turning to ANTONIUS).* Antonius,  
Much graced are we that our Queen Rome  
in you

Deigns to look in upon our barbarisms.

[*Turns, goes up steps to altar before  
the Goddess. Takes a cup from off  
the altar. Holds it towards ANTONIUS.  
ANTONIUS goes up to the foot of the  
steps opposite to SYNORIX.*]

You see this cup, my lord.

[*Gives it to him.*]

*Antonius.* Most curious!

The many-breasted mother Artemis  
Emboss'd upon it.

*Camma.* It is old, I know not  
How many hundred years. Give it me again.  
It is the cup belonging our own Temple.

[*Puts it back on altar, and takes up  
the cup of Act I. Showing it to  
ANTONIUS.*]

Here is another sacred to the Goddess,  
The gift of Synorix; and the Goddess,  
being

For this most grateful, wills, thro' me her  
Priestess,

In honour of his gift and of our marriage,  
That Synorix should drink from his own  
cup.

*Synorix.* I thank thee, Camma,—I thank  
thee.

*Camma.* For—my lord—  
It is our ancient custom in Galatia  
That ere two souls be knit for life and death,  
They two should drink together from one  
cup,  
In symbol of their married unity,  
Making libation to the Goddess. Bring me  
The costly wines we use in marriages.

[*They bring in a large jar of wine.*

*CAMMA pours wine into cup.*

(*To SYNORIX.*) See here, I fill it. (*To ANTONIUS.*) Will you drink, my lord?

*Antonius.* I? Why should I? I am not to be married.

*Camma.* But that might bring a Roman blessing on us.

*Antonius (refusing cup).* Thy pardon, Priestess!

*Camma.* Thou art in the right.  
This blessing is for Synorix and for me.  
See first I make libation to the Goddess,  
[*Makes libation.*

And now I drink.

[*Drinks and fills the cup again.*

Thy turn, Galatian King.

Drink and drink deep—our marriage will be fruitful.

Drink and drink deep, and thou wilt make me happy.

[*SYNORIX goes up to her. She hands him the cup. He drinks.*

*Synorix.* There, Camma! I have almost drain'd the cup—

A few drops left.

*Camma.* Libation to the Goddess.

[*He throws the remaining drops on the altar and gives CAMMA the cup.*

*Camma (placing the cup on the altar).* Why then the Goddess hears.

[*Comes down and forward to tripod.*

*ANTONIUS follows.* *Antonius,*

Where wast thou on that morning when I came

To plead to thee for Sinnatus's life,  
Beside this temple half a year ago?

*Antonius.* I never heard of this request of thine.

*Synorix (coming forward hastily to foot of tripod steps).* I sought him and I could not find him. Pray you,

Go on with the marriage rites.

*Camma.* *Antonius—*  
'Camma!' who spake?

*Antonius.* Not I.

*Phæbe.* Nor any here.

*Camma.* I am all but sure that some one spake. *Antonius,*  
If you had found him plotting against Rome,

Would you have tortured Sinnatus to death?

*Antonius.* No thought was mine of torture or of death,

But had I found him plotting, I had counsell'd him

To rest from vain resistance. Rome is fated To rule the world. Then, if he had not listen'd,

I might have sent him prisoner to Rome.

*Synorix.* Why do you palter with the ceremony?

Go on with the marriage rites.

*Camma.* They are finish'd.

*Synorix.* How!

*Camma.* Thou hast drunk deep enough to make me happy.

Dost thou not feel the love I bear to thee Glow thro' thy veins?

*Synorix.* The love I bear to thee Glows thro' my veins since first I look'd on thee.

But wherefore slur the perfect ceremony?  
The sovereign of Galatia weds his Queen.  
Let all be done to the fullest in the sight Of all the Gods.

Nay, rather than so clip  
The flowery robe of Hymen, we would add  
Some golden fringe of gorgeousness beyond  
Old use, to make the day memorial, when  
*Synorix, first King, Camma, first Queen*  
o' the Realm,  
Drew here the richest lot from Fate, to live  
And die together.

This pain—what is it?—again?  
I had a touch of this last year—in—Rome.  
Yes, yes. (*To ANTONIUS.*) Your arm—a moment—It will pass.

I reel beneath the weight of utter joy—  
This all too happy day, crown—queen at once.

O all ye Gods—Jupiter!—Jupiter!

[*Falls backward.*

*Camma.* Dost thou cry out upon the Gods of Rome?

Thou art Galatian-born. Our Artemis Has vanquish'd their Diana.

*Synorix (on the ground).* I am poison'd. She—close the Temple door. Let her not fly.

*Camma (leaning on tripod).* Have I not drunk of the same cup with thee?

*Synorix.* Ay, by the Gods of Rome and all the world,

She too—she too—the bride! the Queen! and I—

Monstrous! I that loved her.

*Camma.* I loved him.

*Synorix.* O murderous mad-woman! I pray you lift me

And make me walk awhile. I have heard these poisons

May be walk'd down.

[*ANTONIUS and PUBLIUS raise him up.*

My feet are tons of lead,

They will break in the earth—I am sinking—hold me—

Let me alone.

[*They leave him; he sinks down on ground.*

Too late—thought myself wise—  
A woman's dupe. Antonius, tell the Senate  
I have been most true to Rome—would have been true

To her—if—if— [Falls as if dead.

*Camma (coming and leaning over him).*

So falls the throne of an hour.

*Synorix (half rising).* Throne? is it thou? the Fates are throned, not we—

Not guilty of ourselves—thy doom and mine—

Thou—coming my way too—*Camma*—good-night. [Dies.

*Camma (upheld by weeping Priestesses).*

Thy way? poor worm, crawl down  
thine own black hole

To the lowest Hell. Antonius, is *he* there? I meant thee to have follow'd—better thus.

Nay, if my people must be thralls of Rome,

He is gentle, tho' a Roman.

[Sinks back into the arms of the Priestesses.

*Antonius.*

Thou art one

With thine own people, and though a Roman I

Forgive thee, *Camma*.

*Camma (raising herself).* 'CAMMA!'—why there again

I am most sure that some one call'd. O women,

Ye will have Roman masters. I am glad I shall not see it. Did not some old Greek

Say death was the chief good? He had my fate for it,

Poison'd. [*Sinks back again.*] Have I the crown on? I will go

To meet him, crown'd! crown'd victor of my will—

On my last voyage—but the wind has fail'd—

Growing dark too—but light enough to row.

Row to the blessed Isles! the blessed Isles!—

Sinnatus!

Why comes he not to meet me? It is the crown

Offends him—and my hands are too sleepy

To lift it off. [*PHCEBE takes the crown off.* Who touch'd me then? I thank you.

[Rises, with outspread arms.

There—league on league of ever-shining shore

Beneath an ever-rising sun—I see him—

'Camma, Camma!' Sinnatus, Sinnatus!

[Dies.



# THE FALCON

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE COUNT FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI.

FILIPPO, *Count's foster-brother.*

THE LADY GIOVANNA.

ELISABETTA, *the Count's nurse.*

## SCENE

*An Italian Cottage. Castle and Mountains  
seen through Window*

ELISABETTA *discovered seated on stool in  
window darning. The Count with Falcon  
on his hand comes down through the door  
at back. A withered wreath on the wall.*

*Elisabetta.* So, my lord, the Lady  
Giovanna, who hath been away so long,  
came back last night with her son to the  
castle.

*Count.* Hear that, my bird! Art thou not  
jealous of her?

My princess of the cloud, my plumed  
purveyor,

My far-eyed queen of the winds—thou  
that canst soar

Beyond the morning lark, and howsoe'er  
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop down  
upon him

Eagle-like, lightning-like—strike, make his  
feathers

Glance in mid heaven.

*[Crosses to chair.*

I would thou hadst a mate!

Thy breed will die with thee, and mine  
with me:

I am as lone and loveless as thyself.

*[Sits in chair.*

Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself—*be*  
jealous!

Thou should'st be jealous of her. Tho' I  
bred thee

The full-train'd marvel of all falconry,  
And love thee and thou me, yet if Giovanna  
Be here again—No, no! Buss me, my bird!  
The stately widow has no heart for me.

Thou art the last friend left me upon  
earth—

No, no again to that. *[Rises and turns.*

My good old nurse,

I had forgotten thou wast sitting there.

*Ehsabetta.* Ay, and forgotten thy foster-  
brother too.

*Count.* Bird-babble for my falcon! Let  
it pass.

What art thou doing there?

*Ehsabetta.* Darning, your lordship.

We cannot flaunt it in new feathers now:

Nay, if we *will* buy diamond necklaces

To please our lady, we must darn, my lord.

This old thing here *(points to necklace round  
her neck)*,

they are but blue beads—my Piero,

God rest his honest soul, he bought 'em  
for me,

Ay, but he knew I meant to marry him.

How couldst thou do it, my son? How  
couldst thou do it?

*Count.* She saw it at a dance, upon a neck  
Less lovely than her own, and long'd for  
it.

*Elisabetta.* She told thee as much?

*Count.* No, no—a friend of hers.

*Elisabetta.* Shame on her that she took  
it at thy hands,

She rich enough to have bought it for  
herself!

*Count.* She would have robb'd me then  
of a great pleasure.

*Elisabetta.* But hath she yet return'd thy  
love?

*Count.* Not yet!

*Ehsabetta.* She would return thy neck-  
lace then.

*Count.* Ay, if

She knew the giver; but I bound the seller  
To silence, and I left it privily

At Florence, in her palace.

*Ehsabetta.* And sold thine own

## THE FALCON

To buy it for her. She not know? She knows

There's none such other—

*Count.* Madman anywhere  
Speak freely, tho' to call a madman mad  
Will hardly help to make him sane again.

*Enter FILIPPO*

*Filippo.* Ah, the women, the women! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here again! you that have the face of an angel and the heart of a—that's too positive! You that have a score of lovers and have not a heart for any of them—that's positive-negative: you that have *not* the head of a toad, and *not* a heart like the jewel in it—that's too negative; you that have a cheek like a peach and a heart like the stone in it—that's positive again—that's better!

*Elisabetta.* Sh—sh—Filippo!

*Filippo (turns half round).* Here has our master been a-glorifying and a-velveting and a-silking himself, and a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch her eye for a dozen year, till he hasn't an eye left in his own tail to flourish among the peahens, and all along o' you, Monna Giovanna, all along o' you!

*Elisabetta.* Sh—sh—Filippo! Can't you hear that you are saying behind his back what you see you are saying afore his face?

*Count.* Let him—he never spares me to my face!

*Filippo.* No, my lord, I never spare your lordship to your lordship's face, nor behind your lordship's back, nor to right, nor to left, nor to round about and back to your lordship's face again, for I'm honest, your lordship.

*Count.* Come, come, Filippo, what is there in the larder?

[ELISABETTA crosses to fireplace and puts on wood.]

*Filippo.* Shelves and hooks, shelves and hooks, and when I see the shelves I am like to hang myself on the hooks.

*Count.* No bread?

*Filippo.* Half a breakfast for a rat!

*Count.* Milk?

*Filippo.* Three laps for a cat!

*Count.* Cheese?

*Filippo.* A supper for twelve mites.

*Count.* Eggs?

*Filippo.* One, but addled.

*Count.* No bird?

*Filippo.* Half a tit and a hern's bill.

*Count.* Let be thy jokes and thy jerks, man! Anything or nothing?

*Filippo.* Well, my lord, if all-but-nothing be anything, and one plate of dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then there is anything in your lordship's larder at your lordship's service, if your lordship care to call for it.

*Count.* Good mother, happy was the prodigal son,

For he return'd to the rich father; I  
But add my poverty to thine. And all

Thro' following of my fancy. Pray thee  
make

Thy slender meal out of those scraps and  
shreds

Filippo spoke of. As for him and me,  
There sprouts a salad in the garden  
still.

(*To the Falcon.*) Why didst thou miss thy  
quarry yester-even?

To-day, my beauty, thou must dash us  
down

Our dinner from the skies. Away, Filippo!

[Exit, followed by FILIPPO.]

*Elisabetta.* I knew it would come to this. She has beggared him. I always knew it would come to this! (*Goes up to table as if to resume darning, and looks out of window.*) Why, as I live, there is Monna Giovanna coming down the hill from the castle. Stops and stares at our cottage. Ay, ay! stare at it: it's all you have left us. Shame on you! *She* beautiful: sleek as a miller's mouse! Meal enough, meat enough, well fed; but beautiful—bah! Nay, see, why she turns down the path through our little vineyard, and I sneezed three times this morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in her life too! Why, bless the saints! I'll be bound to confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this—I always knew it must come to this! (*Going up to door during latter part of speech and opens it.*) Come in, Madonna, come in. (*Retires to front of table and*

## THE FALCON

*curtseys as the LADY GIOVANNA enters, then moves chair towards the hearth.*) Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship.

*[LADY GIOVANNA moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.]*

*Lady Giovanna.* Can I speak with the Count?

*Elisabetta.* Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. When he was a little one, and I put the bitters on my breast to wean him, he made a wry mouth at it, but he took it so kindly, and your ladyship has given him bitters enough in this world, and he never made a wry mouth at you, he always took you so kindly—which is more than I did, my lady, more than I did—and he so handsome—and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self—and better late than never—but come when they will—then or now—it's all for the best, come when they will—they are made by the blessed saints—these marriages.

*[Raises her hands.]*

*Lady Giovanna.* Marriages? I shall never marry again!

*Elisabetta (rises and turns).* Shame on her then!

*Lady Giovanna.* Where is the Count?

*Elisabetta.* Just gone

To fly his falcon.

*Lady Giovanna.* Call him back and say I come to breakfast with him.

*Elisabetta.* Holy mother! To breakfast! Oh sweet saints! one plate of prunes!

Well, Madam, I will give your message to him. *[Exit.]*

*Lady Giovanna.* His falcon, and I come to ask for his falcon,  
The pleasure of his eyes—boast of his hand—

Pride of his heart—the solace of his hours—

His one companion here—nay, I have heard That, thro' his late magnificence of living And this last costly gift to mine own self,

*[Shows diamond necklace.]*

He hath become so beggar'd, that his falcon Ev'n wins his dinner for him in the field. That must be talk, not truth, but truth or talk,

How can I ask for his falcon?

*[Rises and moves as she speaks.]*

O my sick boy!

My daily fading Florio, it is thou Hath set me this hard task, for when I say What can I do—what can I get for thee? He answers, 'Get the Count to give me his falcon,

And that will make me well.' Yet if I ask, He loves me, and he knows I know he loves me!

Will he not pray me to return his love— To marry him?—*(pause)*—I can never marry him.

His grandsire struck my grandsire in a brawl

At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd him there.

The feud between our houses is the bar I cannot cross; I dare not brave my brother,

Break with my kin. My brother hates him, scorns

The noblest-natured man alive, and I— Who have that reverence for him that I scarce

Dare beg him to receive his diamonds back—

How can I, dare I, ask him for his falcon? *[Puts diamonds in her casket.]*

*Re-enter COUNT and FILIPPO. COUNT turns to FILIPPO*

*Count.* Do what I said; I cannot do it myself.

*Filippo.* Why then, my lord, we are pauper'd out and out.

*Count.* Do what I said!

*[Advances and bows low.]*

Welcome to this poor cottage, my dear lady.

## THE FALCON

- Lady Giovanna.* And welcome turns a cottage to a palace.
- Count.* 'Tis long since we have met!
- Lady Giovanna.* To make amends I come this day to break my fast with you.
- Count.* I am much honour'd—yes—  
[Turns to FILIPPO.]
- Do what I told thee. Must I do it myself?
- Filippo.* I will, I will. (*Sighs.*) Poor fellow! [*Exit.*]
- Count.* Lady, you bring your light into my cottage  
Who never deign'd to shine into my palace.  
My palace wanting you was but a cottage;  
My cottage, while you grace it, is a palace.
- Lady Giovanna.* In cottage or in palace, being still
- Beyond your fortunes, you are still the king
- Of courtesy and liberality.
- Count.* I trust I still maintain my courtesy;
- My liberality perforce is dead  
Thro' lack of means of giving.
- Lady Giovanna.* Yet I come To ask a gift. [*Moves toward him a little.*]
- Count.* It will be hard, I fear,  
To find one shock upon the field when all The harvest has been carried.
- Lady Giovanna.* But my boy—  
(*Aside.*) No, no! not yet—I cannot!
- Count.* Ay, how is he,  
That bright inheritor of your eyes—your boy?
- Lady Giovanna.* Alas, my Lord Federigo, he hath fallen  
Into a sickness, and it troubles me.
- Count.* Sick! is it so? why, when he came last year  
To see me hawking, he was well enough:  
And then I taught him all our hawking-phrases.
- Lady Giovanna.* Oh yes, and once you let him fly your falcon.
- Count.* How charm'd he was! what wonder?—A gallant boy,  
A noble bird, each perfect of the breed.
- Lady Giovanna* (*sinks in chair*). What do you rate her at?
- Count.* My bird? a hundred Gold pieces once were offer'd by the Duke.  
I had no heart to part with her for money.
- Lady Giovanna.* No, not for money.  
[COUNT turns away and sighs.]
- Wherefore do you sigh?
- Count.* I have lost a friend of late.
- Lady Giovanna.* I could sigh with you  
For fear of losing more than friend, a son;  
And if he leave me—all the rest of life—  
That wither'd wreath were of more worth to me. [*Looking at wreath on wall.*]
- Count.* That wither'd wreath is of more worth to me  
Than all the blossom, all the leaf of this New-wakening year.  
[Goes and takes down wreath.]
- Lady Giovanna.* And yet I never saw  
The land so rich in blossom as this year.
- Count* (*holding wreath toward her*). Was not the year when this was gather'd richer?
- Lady Giovanna.* How long ago was that?
- Count.* Alas, ten summers!  
A lady that was beautiful as day  
Sat by me at a rustic festival  
With other beauties on a mountain meadow,  
And she was the most beautiful of all;  
Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.  
The mountain flowers grew thickly round about.
- I made a wreath with some of these; I ask'd  
A ribbon from her hair to bind it with;  
I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen of Beauty,  
And softly placed the chaplet on her head.  
A colour, which has colour'd all my life,  
Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd away;  
And presently all rose, and so departed.  
Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on the grass,  
And there I found it.  
[Lets his hands fall, holding wreath despondingly.]
- Lady Giovanna* (*after pause*). How long since do you say?
- Count.* That was the very year before you married.
- Lady Giovanna.* When I was married you were at the wars.

## THE FALCON

**Count.** Had she not thrown my chaplet  
on the grass,  
It may be I had never seen the wars.

*[Replaces wreath whence he had taken it.]*

**Lady Giovanna.** Ah, but, my lord, there  
ran a rumour then

That you were kill'd in battle. I can tell you  
True tears that year were shed for you in  
Florence.

**Count.** It might have been as well for me.

Unhappily

I was but wounded by the enemy there  
And then imprison'd.

**Lady Giovanna.** Happily, however, I see  
you quite recover'd of your wound.

**Count.** No, no, not quite, Madonna, not  
yet, not yet.

*Re-enter FILIPPO*

**Filippo.** My lord, a word with you.

**Count.** Pray, pardon me!

*[LADY GIOVANNA crosses, and passes  
behind chair and takes down wreath;  
then goes to chair by table.]*

**Count (to FILIPPO).** What is it, Filippo?

**Filippo.** Spoons, your lordship.

**Count.** Spoons!

**Filippo.** Yes, my lord, for wasn't my lady  
born with a golden spoon in her ladyship's  
mouth, and we haven't never so much as a  
silver one for the golden lips of her lady-  
ship.

**Count.** Have we not half a score of silver  
spoons?

**Filippo.** Half o' one, my lord!

**Count.** How half of one?

**Filippo.** I trod upon him even now, my  
lord, in my hurry, and broke him.

**Count.** And the other nine?

**Filippo.** Sold! but shall I not mount  
with your lordship's leave to her ladyship's  
castle, in your lordship's and her lady-  
ship's name, and confer with her ladyship's  
seneschal, and so descend again with some  
of her ladyship's own appurtenances?

**Count.** Why—no, man. Only see your  
cloth be clean. *[Exit FILIPPO.]*

**Lady Giovanna.** Ay, ay, this faded  
ribbon was the mode

In Florence ten years back. What's here?  
a scroll

Pinned to the wreath.

My lord, you have said so much  
Of this poor wreath that I was bold enough  
To take it down, if but to guess what  
flowers

Had made it; and I find a written scroll  
That seems to run in rhymings. Might I  
read?

**Count.** Ay, if you will.

**Lady Giovanna.** It should be if you can.  
*(Reads.)* 'Dead mountain.' Nay, for who  
could trace a hand

So wild and staggering?

**Count.** This was penn'd, Madonna,  
Close to the grating on a winter morn  
In the perpetual twilight of a prison,  
When he that made it, having his right  
hand

Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his left.

**Lady Giovanna.** O heavens! the very  
letters seem to shake

With cold, with pain perhaps, poor  
prisoner! Well,

Tell me the words—or better—for I see  
There goes a musical score along with  
them,

Repeat them to their music.

**Count.**

You can touch  
No chord in me that would not answer you  
In music.

**Lady Giovanna.** That is musically said.

*[COUNT takes guitar. LADY GIOVANNA  
sits listening with wreath in her hand,  
and quietly removes scroll and places  
it on table at the end of the song.]*

**Count (sings, playing guitar).** 'Dead  
mountain flowers, dead mountain-  
meadow flowers,  
Dearer than when you made your moun-  
tain gay,

Sweeter than any violet of to-day,  
Richer than all the wide world-wealth of  
May,

To me, tho' all your bloom has died away,  
You bloom again, dead mountain-meadow  
flowers.'

*Enter ELISABETTA with cloth*

**Elisabetta.** A word with you, my lord!

**Count (singing).** 'O mountain flowers!'

**Elisabetta.** A word, my lord! *(Louder.)*

## THE FALCON

*Count (sings).* 'Dead flowers!'

*Elisabetta.* A word, my lord!

*(Louder).*

*Count.* I pray you pardon me again!

[*LADY GIOVANNA looking at wreath.*

*Count (to ELISABETTA).* What is it?

*Elisabetta.* My lord, we have but one piece of earthenware to serve the salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

*Count.* Why then, that flower'd bowl my ancestor

Fetch'd from the farthest east—we never use it

For fear of breakage—but this day has brought

A great occasion. You can take it, nurse!

*Elisabetta.* I did take it, my lord, but what with my lady's coming that had so flurried me, and what with the fear of breaking it, I did break it, my lord: it is broken!

*Count.* My one thing left of value in the world!

No matter! see your cloth be white as snow!

*Elisabetta (pointing thro' window).*

White? I warrant thee, my son, as the snow yonder on the very tip-top o' the mountain.

*Count.* And yet to speak white truth, my good old mother,

I have seen it like the snow on the moraine.

*Elisabetta.* How can your lordship say so? 'There my lord! [*Lays cloth.*

O my dear son, be not unkind to me.

And one word more. [*Going—returns.*

*Count (touching guitar).* Good! let it be but one.

*Elisabetta.* Hath she return'd thy love?

*Count.* Not yet!

*Elisabetta.* And will she?

*Count (looking at LADY GIOVANNA).* I scarce believe it!

*Elisabetta.* Shame upon her then!

[*Exit.*

*Count (sings).* 'Dead mountain flowers'—

Ah well, my nurse has broken  
The thread of my dead flowers, as she has broken

My china bowl. My memory is as dead.

[*Goes and replaces guitar.*

Strange that the words at home with me so long

Should fly like bosom friends when needed most.

So by your leave if you would hear the rest,

—The writing.

*Lady Giovanna (holding wreath toward him).* There! my lord, you are a poet,

And can you not imagine that the wreath, Set, as you say, so lightly on her head, Fell with her motion as she rose, and she, A girl, a child, then but fifteen, however Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice of her, Was yet too bashful to return for it?

*Count.* Was it so indeed? was it so? was it so?

[*Leans forward to take wreath, and touches LADY GIOVANNA'S hand, which she withdraws hastily; he places wreath on corner of chair.*

*Lady Giovanna (with dignity).* I did not say, my lord, that it was so;

I said you might imagine it was so.

*Enter FILIPPO with bowl of salad, which he places on table*

*Filippo.* Here's a fine salad for my lady, for tho' we have been a soldier, and ridden by his lordship's side, and seen the red of the battle-field, yet are we now drill-sergeant to his lordship's lettuces, and profess to be great in green things and in garden-stuff.

*Lady Giovanna.* I thank thee, good

Filippo. [*Exit FILIPPO.*

*Enter ELISABETTA with bird on a dish which she places on table*

*Elisabetta (close to table).* Here's a fine fowl for my lady; I had scant time to do him in. I hope he be not underdone, for we be undone in the doing of him.

*Lady Giovanna.* I thank you, my good nurse.

*Filippo (re-entering with plate of prunes).* And here are fine fruits for my lady—prunes, my lady, from the tree that my lord himself planted here in the blossom

## THE FALCON

of his boyhood—and so I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's pardon, and as your ladyship knows, his lordship's own foster-brother, would commend them to your ladyship's most peculiar appreciation.

[Puts plate on table.]

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Lady Giovanna* (COUNT leads her to table).

Will you not eat with me, my lord?

*Count.* I cannot,

Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have broken

My fast already. I will pledge you. Wine! Filippo, wine!

[Sits near table; FILIPPO brings flask, fills the COUNT'S goblet, then LADY GIOVANNA'S; ELISABETTA stands at the back of LADY GIOVANNA'S chair.]

*Count.* It is but thin and cold,

Not like the vintage blowing round your castle.

We lie too deep down in the shadow here. Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[They pledge each other and drink.]

*Lady Giovanna.* If I might send you down a flask or two

Of that same vintage? There is iron in it. It has been much commended as a medicine.

I give it my sick son, and if you be Not quite recover'd of your wound, the wine

Might help you. None has ever told me yet The story of your battle and your wound.

*Filippo* (coming forward). I can tell you, my lady, I can tell you.

*Elisabetta.* Filippo! will you take the word out of your master's own mouth?

*Filippo.* Was it there to take? Put it there, my lord.

*Count.* Giovanna, my dear lady, in this same battle

We had been beaten—they were ten to one. The trumpets of the fight had echo'd down, I and Filippo here had done our best, And, having passed unwounded from the field,

Were seated sadly at a fountain side, Our horses grazing by us, when a troop, Laden with booty and with a flag of ours Ta'en in the fight—

*Filippo.* Ay, but we fought for it back, And kill'd—

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Count.* A troop of horse—

*Filippo.* Five hundred!

*Count.* Say fifty!

*Filippo.* And we kill'd 'em by the score!

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Filippo.* Well, well, well! I bite my tongue.

*Count.* We may have left their fifty less by five.

However, staying not to count how many, But anger'd at their flaunting of our flag, We mounted, and we dash'd into the heart of 'em.

I wore the lady's chaplet round my neck; It served me for a blessed rosary.

I am sure that more than one brave fellow owed

His death to the charm in it.

*Elisabetta.* Hear that, my lady!

*Count.* I cannot tell how long we strove before

Our horses fell beneath us; down we went Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled underfoot.

The night,

As some cold-manner'd friend may strangely do us

The truest service, had a touch of frost That help'd to check the flowing of the blood.

My last sight ere I swoon'd was one sweet face

Crown'd with the wreath. *That* seem'd to come and go.

They left us there for dead!

*Elisabetta.* Hear that, my lady!

*Filippo.* Ay, and I left two fingers there for dead. See, my lady! (*Showing his hand.*)

*Lady Giovanna.* I see, Filippo!

*Filippo.* And I have small hope of the gentleman gout in my great toe.

*Lady Giovanna.* And why, Filippo?

[Smiling absently.]

*Filippo.* I left him there for dead too! *Elisabetta.* She smiles at him—how hard the woman is!

My lady, if your ladyship were not Too proud to look upon the garland, you Would find it stain'd—

## THE FALCON

*Count (rising).* Silence, Elisabetta!  
*Elisabetta.* Stain'd with the blood of the  
 best heart that ever  
 Beat for one woman.

[*Points to wreath on chair.*

*Lady Giovanna (rising slowly).* I can eat  
 no more!

*Count.* You have but trifled with our  
 homely salad,  
 But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf;  
 Not eaten anything.

*Lady Giovanna.* Nay, nay, I cannot.  
 You know, my lord, I told you I was  
 troubled.

My one child Florio lying still so sick,  
 I bound myself, and by a solemn vow,  
 That I would touch no flesh till he were  
 well

Here, or else well in Heaven, where all is  
 well.

[*ELISABETTA clears table of bird and  
 salad: FILIPPO snatches up the plate  
 of prunes and holds them to LADY  
 GIOVANNA.*

*Filippo.* But the prunes, my lady, from  
 the tree that his lordship—

*Lady Giovanna.* Not now, Filippo. My  
 lord Federigo,  
 Can I not speak with you once more  
 alone?

*Count.* You hear, Filippo? My good  
 fellow, go!

*Filippo.* But the prunes that your lord-  
 ship—

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Count.* Ay, prune our company of thine  
 own and go!

*Elisabetta.* Filippo!

*Filippo (turning).* Well, well! the women!  
 [Exit.

*Count.* And thou too leave us, my dear  
 nurse, alone.

*Elisabetta (folding up cloth and going).*  
 And me too! Ay, the dear nurse will leave  
 you alone; but, for all that, she that has  
 eaten the yolk is scarce like to swallow the  
 shell.

[*Turns and curtsies stiffly to LADY  
 GIOVANNA, then exit. LADY GIOVANNA  
 takes out diamond necklace from  
 casket.*

*Lady Giovanna.* I have anger'd your  
 good nurse; these old-world servants  
 Are all but flesh and blood with those they  
 serve.

My lord, I have a present to return you,  
 And afterwards a boon to crave of you.

*Count.* No, my most honour'd and long-  
 worshippt lady,

*Poor Federigo degli Alberighi*  
 Takes nothing in return from you except  
 Return of his affection—can deny  
 Nothing to you that you require of him.

*Lady Giovanna.* Then I require you to  
 take back your diamonds—

[*Offering necklace.*

I doubt not they are yours. No other heart  
 Of such magnificence in courtesy  
 Beats—out of heaven. They seem'd too  
 rich a prize

To trust with any messenger. I came  
 In person to return them.

[*COUNT draws back.*

If the phrase

'Return' displease you, we will say—  
 exchange them

For your—for your—

*Count (takes a step toward her and then  
 back).* For mine—and what of mine?

*Lady Giovanna.* Well, shall we say this  
 wreath and your sweet rhymes?

*Count.* But have you ever worn my  
 diamonds?

*Lady Giovanna.* No!  
 For that would seem accepting of your  
 love.

I cannot brave my brother—but be sure  
 That I shall never marry again, my lord!

*Count.* Sure?

*Lady Giovanna.* Yes!

*Count.* Is this your brother's order?

*Lady Giovanna.* No!  
 For he would marry me to the richest man  
 In Florence; but I think you know the  
 saying—

'Better a man without riches, than riches  
 without a man.'

*Count.* A noble saying—and acted on  
 would yield

A nobler breed of men and women. Lady,  
 I find you a shrewd bargainer. The wreath  
 That once you wore outvalues twentyfold



## THE FALCON

The diamonds that you never deign'd to wear.

But lay them there for a moment!

[*Points to table.* LADY GIOVANNA  
places necklace on table.

And be you  
Gracious enough to let me know the boon  
By granting which, if aught be mine to grant,

I should be made more happy than I hoped  
Ever to be again.

*Lady Giovanna.* Then keep your wreath,  
But you will find me a shrewd bargainer  
still.

I cannot keep your diamonds, for the gift  
I ask for, to my mind and at this present  
Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.

*Count.* It should be love that thus out-  
values all.

You speak like love, and yet you love me  
not.

I have nothing in this world but love for  
you.

*Lady Giovanna.* Love? it is love, love  
for my dying boy,  
Moves me to ask it of you.

*Count.* What? my time?  
Is it my time? Well, I can give my time  
To him that is a part of you, your son.  
Shall I return to the castle with you?  
Shall I

Sit by him, read to him, tell him my tales,  
Sing him my songs? You know that I can  
touch

The glittern to some purpose.

*Lady Giovanna.* No, not that!  
I thank you heartily for that—and you,  
I doubt not from your nobleness of nature,  
Will pardon me for asking what I ask.

*Count.* Giovanna, dear Giovanna, I that  
once

The wildest of the random youth of  
Florence

Before I saw you—all my nobleness  
Of nature, as you deign to call it, draws  
From you, and from my constancy to you.  
No more, but speak.

*Lady Giovanna.* I will. You know sick  
people,  
More specially sick children, have strange  
fancies,

Strange longings; and to thwart them in  
their mood

May work them grievous harm at times,  
may even

Hasten their end. I would you had a son!  
It might be easier then for you to make  
Allowance for a mother—her—who comes  
To rob you of your one delight on earth.  
How often has my sick boy yearn'd for  
this!

I have put him off as often; but to-day  
I dared not—so much weaker, so much  
worse

For last day's journey. I was weeping for  
him;

He gave me his hand: 'I should be well  
again

If the good Count would give me——'

*Count.* Give me.

*Lady Giovanna.* His falcon.

*Count (starts back).* My falcon!

*Lady Giovanna.* Yes, your falcon,  
Federigo!

*Count.* Alas, I cannot!

*Lady Giovanna.* Cannot? Even so!

I fear'd as much. O this unhappy world!  
How shall I break it to him? how shall I  
tell him?

The boy may die: more blessed were the  
rags

Of some pale beggar-woman seeking alms  
For her sick son, if he were like to live,  
Than all my childless wealth, if mine  
must die.

I was to blame—the love you said you  
bore me—

My lord, we thank you for your entertain-  
ment. [*With a stately curtsy.*

And so return—Heaven help him!—to our  
son. [*Turns.*

*Count (rushes forward).* Stay, stay, I am  
most unlucky, most unhappy.

You never had look'd in on me before,  
And when you came and dipt your  
sovereign head

Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to eat  
with me.

I had but emptiness to set before you,  
No not a draught of milk, no not an egg,  
Nothing but my brave bird, my noble  
falcon,

## THE FALCON

My comrade of the house, and of the field.

She had to die for it—she died for you.  
Perhaps I thought with those of old, the nobler

The victim was, the more acceptable  
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you scarce  
Will thank me for your entertainment now.

*Lady Giovanna (returning).* I bear with him no longer.

*Count.* No, Madonna!  
And he will have to bear with it as he may.

*Lady Giovanna.* I break with him for ever!

*Count.* Yes, Giovanna,  
But he will keep his love to you for ever!

*Lady Giovanna.* You? you? not you!

My brother! my hard brother!

O Federigo, Federigo, I love you!  
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Federigo.

*[Falls at his feet.]*

*Count (impetuously).* Why then the  
dying of my noble bird  
Hath served me better than her living—  
then *[Takes diamonds from table.]*

These diamonds are both yours and mine  
—have won

Their value again—beyond all markets—  
there

I lay them for the first time round your  
neck. *[Lays necklace round her neck.]*

And then this chaplet—No more feuds,  
but peace,

Peace and conciliation! I will make

Your brother love me. See, I tear away

The leaves were darken'd by the battle—  
*[Pulls leaves off and throws them down.]*

—crown you

Again with the same crown my Queen of  
Beauty. *[Places wreath on her head.]*

Rise—I could almost think that the dead  
garland

Will break once more into the living  
blossom.

Nay, nay, I pray you rise.

*[Raises her with both hands.]*

We two together

Will help to heal your son—your son and  
mine—

We shall do it—we shall do it.

*[Embraces her.]*

The purpose of my being is accomplish'd,  
And I am happy!

*Lady Giovanna.* And I too, Federigo.

# THE PROMISE OF MAY

'A surface man of theories, true to none'

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FARMER DOBSON.

MR. PHILIP EDGAR (*afterwards* MR. HAROLD).

FARMER STEER (*DORA and EVA's Father*).

MR. WILSON (*a Schoolmaster*).

HIGGINS

JAMES

DAN SMITH } *Farm Labourers.*

JACKSON

ALLEN

DORA STEER.

EVA STEER.

SALLY ALLEN } *Farm Servants.*

MILLY

*Farm Servants, Labourers, etc.*

## ACT I

### SCENE

#### *Before Farmhouse*

*Farming Men and Women. Farming Men carrying forms, etc., Women carrying baskets of knives and forks, etc.*

1st Farming Man. Be thou a-gawin' to the long barn?

2nd Farming Man. Ay, to be sewer! Be thou?

1st Farming Man. Why, o' coorse, fur it be the owd man's birthdaäy. He be heichty this very daäy, and 'e telled all on us to be i' the long barn by one o'clock, fur he'll gie us a big dinner, and haafe th' parish 'll be theer, an' Miss Dora, an' Miss Eva, an' all!

2nd Farming Man. Miss Dora be coomed back, then?

1st Farming Man. Ay, haäfe an hour ago. She be in theer now. (*Pointing to house.*) Owd Steer wur afeärd she wouldn't be back i' time to keep his birthdaäy, and he wur in a tew about it all the murnin'; and he sent me wi' the gig to Littlechester to fetch 'er; and 'er an' the owd man they fell a kissin' o' one another like two sweet'arts i' the poorch as soon as he clapt eyes of 'er.

2nd Farming Man. Foälsk says he likes Miss Eva the best.

1st Farming Man. Naäy, I knaws nowt

o' what foälsk says, an' I caires nowt neither. Foälsk doesn't hallus knaw thes-sens; but sewer I be, they be-two o' the purtiest gels ye can see of a summer murnin'.

2nd Farming Man. Beant Miss Eva gone off a bit of 'er good looks o' laate?

1st Farming Man. Noä, not a bit.

2nd Farming Man. Why coöm awaay, then, to the long barn. [*Exeunt.*]

DORA looks out of window. Enter DOBSON.

*Dora (singing)*

The town lay still in the low sun-light,  
The hen cluckt late by the white farm gate,  
The maid to her dairy came in from the cow,

The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,  
The blossom had open'd on every bough;  
O joy for the promise of May, of May,  
O joy for the promise of May.

(*Nodding at DOBSON.*) I'm coming down, Mr. Dobson. I haven't seen Eva yet. Is she anywhere in the garden?

Dobson. Noä, Miss. I ha'n't seed 'er neither.

*Dora (enters singing)*

But a red fire woke in the heart of the town,

And a fox from the glen ran away with the hen,

And a cat to the cream, and a rat to the cheese;  
 And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite dropt down,  
 And a salt wind burnt the blossoming trees;  
 O grief for the promise of May, of May,  
 O grief for the promise of May.

I don't know why I sing that song; I don't love it.

*Dobson.* Blessings on your pretty voice, Miss Dora. Wheer did they larn ye that?

*Dora.* In Cumberland, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson.* An' how did ye leave the owd uncle i' Coomberland?

*Dora.* Getting better, Mr. Dobson. But he'll never be the same man again.

*Dobson.* An' how d'ye find the owd man 'ere?

*Dora.* As well as ever. I came back to keep his birthday.

*Dobson.* Well, I be doomed to keep his birthdaay an' all. The owd man be heighty to-daay, beant he?

*Dora.* Yes, Mr. Dobson. And the day's bright like a friend, but the wind east like an enemy. Help me to move this bench for him into the sun. (*They move bench.*) No, not that way—here, under the apple tree. Thank you. Look how full of rosy blossom it is.

[*Pointing to apple tree.*]

*Dobson.* Theer be redder blossoms nor them, Miss Dora.

*Dora.* Where do they blow, Mr. Dobson?

*Dobson.* Under your eyes, Miss Dora.

*Dora.* Do they?

*Dobson.* And your eyes be as blue as—

*Dora.* What, Mr. Dobson? A butcher's frock?

*Dobson.* Noa, Miss Dora; as blue as—

*Dora.* Bluebell, harebell, speedwell, bluebottle, succory, forget-me-not?

*Dobson.* Noa, Miss Dora; as blue as—

*Dora.* The sky? or the sea on a blue day?

*Dobson.* Naay then. I mean'd they be as blue as violets.

*Dora.* Are they?

*Dobson.* Theer ye goas ageän, Miss, niver believing owt I says to ye—hallus a-fobbing ma off, tho' ye knows I love ye. I warrants ye'll think moor o' this young Squire Edgar

as ha' coomed among us—the Lord knows how—ye'll think more on 'is little finger than hall my hand at the haltar.

*Dora.* Perhaps, Master Dobson. I can't tell, for I have never seen him. But my sister wrote that he was mighty pleasant, and had no pride in him.

*Dobson.* He'll be arter you now, Miss Dora.

*Dora.* Will he? How can I tell?

*Dobson.* He's been arter Miss Eva, haan't he?

*Dora.* Not that I know.

*Dobson.* Didn't I spy 'em a-sitting i' the woodbine harbour together?

*Dora.* What of that? Eva told me that he was taking her likeness. He's an artist.

*Dobson.* What's a hartist? I doant believe he's iver a 'cart under his waistcoat. And I tells ye what, Miss Dora: he's no respect for the Queen, or the parson, or the justice o' peace, or owt. I ha' heard 'im a-gawin' on 'ud make your 'air—God bless it!—stan' on end. And wuss nor that. When theer wur a meeting o' farmers at Littlechester t'other daay, and they was all a-crying out at the bad times, he cooms up, and he calls out among our oan men, 'The land belongs to the people!'

*Dora.* And what did you say to that?

*Dobson.* Well, I says, s'pose my pig's the land, and you says it belongs to the parish, and theer be a thousand i' the parish, taäkin' in the women and childer; and s'pose I kills my pig, and gi'es it among 'em, why there wudn't be a dinner for nawbody, and I should ha' lost the pig.

*Dora.* And what did he say to that?

*Dobson.* Nowt—what could he saay? But I taakes 'im fur a bad lot and a burn fool, and I haates the very sight on him.

*Dora* (*looking at DOBSON*). Master Dobson, you are a comely man to look at.

*Dobson.* I thank you for that, Miss Dora, onyhow.

*Dora.* Ay, but you turn right ugly when you're in an ill temper; and I promise you that if you forget yourself in your behaviour to this gentleman, my father's friend, I will never change word with you again.

*Enter FARMING MAN from barn*

*Farming Man.* Miss, the farming men 'ull hev their dinner i' the long barn, and the master 'ud be straaenge an' pleased if you'd step in fust, and see that all be right and reg'lar fur 'em afoor he coom. [*Exit.*]

*Dora.* I go. Master Dobson, did you hear what I said?

*Dobson.* Yeas, yeas! I'll not meddle wi' 'im if he doant meddle wi' meä. (*Exit DORA.*) Coomly, says she. I niver thowt o' mysen i' that waay; but if she'd taake to ma i' that waay, or ony waay, I'd slaave out my life fur 'er. 'Coomly to look at,' says she—but she said it spiteful-like. To look at—yeas, 'coomly'; and she mayn't be so fur out theer. But if that be nowt to she, then it be nowt to me. (*Looking off stage.*) Schoolmaster! Why if Steer han't haxed schoolmaster to dinner, thaw 'e knaws I was hallus ageän heving schoolmaster i' the parish! fur him as be handy wi' a book bean't but haafe a hand at a pitchfork.

*Enter WILSON*

Well, Wilson. I seed that one cow o' thine i' the pinfold ageän as I wur a-coomin' 'ere.

*Wilson.* Very likely, Mr. Dobson. She *will* break fence. I can't keep her in order.

*Dobson.* An' if tha can't keep thy one cow i' horder, how can tha keep all thy scholars i' horder? But let that goä by. What dost a know o' this Mr. Hedgar as be a-lodgin' wi' ye? I coom'd upon 'im t'other daay lookin' at the coontry, then a-scrattin upon a bit o' paäper, then a-lookin' ageän; and I taäked 'im fur soom sort of a land-surveyor—but a beant.

*Wilson.* He's a Somersetshire man, and a very civil-spoken gentleman.

*Dobson.* Gentleman! What be he a-doing here ten mile an' moor fro' a raail? We laays out o' the waay fur gentlefoalk altogether—leastwaäys they niver cooms 'ere but fur the trout i' our beck, fur they be knaw'd as far as Littlechester. But 'e doänt fish neither.

*Wilson.* Well, it's no sin in a gentleman not to fish.

*Dobson.* Noä, but I haätes 'im.

*Wilson.* Better step out of his road, then, for he's walking to us, and with a book in his hand.

*Dobson.* An' I haätes booöks an' all, fur they puts foälk off the owd waäys.

*Enter EDGAR, reading—not seeing DOBSON and WILSON*

*Edgar.* This author, with his charm of simple style

And close dialectic, all but proving man  
An automatic series of sensations,  
Has often numb'd me into apathy  
Against the unpleasant jolts of this rough road

That breaks off short into the abysses—  
made me

A Quietist taking all things easily.

*Dobson. (Aside.)* There mun be summut wrong theer, Wilson, fur I doant understan' it.

*Wilson. (Aside.)* Nor I either, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson (scornfully).* An' thou doänt understan' it neither—and thou schoolmaster an' all.

*Edgar.* What can a man, then, live for but sensations,

Pleasant ones? men of old would undergo  
Unpleasant for the sake of pleasant ones  
Hereafter, like the Moslem beauties  
waiting

To clasp their lovers by the golden gates.  
For me, whose cheerless Houris after death

Are Night and Silence, pleasant ones—the  
while—

If possible, here! to crop the flower and  
pass.

*Dobson.* Well, I never 'eärd the likes o' that afoor.

*Wilson. (Aside.)* But I have, Mr. Dobson. It's the old Scripture text, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' I'm sorry for it, for, tho' he never comes to church, I thought better of him.

*Edgar.* 'What are we,' says the blind old man in Lear?

'As flies to the Gods; they kill us for their sport.'

ACT I

THE PROMISE OF MAY

*Dobson. (Aside.)* Then the owd man i' Lear should be shaamed of hissen, but noan o' the parishes goas by that naame 'ereabouts.

*Edgar.* The Gods! but they, the shadows of ourselves,  
Have past for ever. It is Nature kills,  
And not for *her* sport either. She knows nothing.

Man only knows, the worse for him! for why

Cannot *he* take his pastime like the flies?

And if my pleasure breed another's pain,  
Well—is not that the course of Nature too,

From the dim dawn of Being—her main law

Whereby she grows in beauty—that *her* flies

Must massacre each other? this poor Nature!

*Dobson.* Natur! Natur! Well, it be i' my natur to knock 'im o' the 'ead now; but I went.

*Edgar.* A Quietist taking all things easily  
—why—

Have I been dipping into this again  
To steel myself against the leaving her?

[*Closes book, seeing WILSON.*]

Good day!

*Wilson.* Good day, sir.

[*DOBSON looks hard at EDGAR.*]

*Edgar (to DOBSON).* Have I the pleasure,  
friend, of knowing you?

*Dobson.* Dobson.

*Edgar.* Good day, then, Dobson.

[*Exit.*]

*Dobson.* 'Good daay then, Dobson!' Civil-spoken i'deed! Why, Wilson, tha 'card 'im thysen—the feller couldn't find a Mister in his mouth fur me, as farms five hoonderd haacre.

*Wilson.* You never find onc for me, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson.* Noä, fur thou be nobbut school-master; but I taäkes 'im for a Lunnun swindler, and a burn fool.

*Wilson.* He can hardly be both, and he paws me regular every Saturday.

*Dobson.* Yeas; but I haätes 'im.

*Enter STEER, FARM MEN and WOMEN*

*Steer (goes and sits under apple tree).*  
Hev' ony o' ye seen Eva?

*Dobson.* Noä, Mr. Steer.

*Steer.* Well, I reckons they'll hev' a fine cider-crop to-year if the blossom 'owds. Good murnin', neighbours, and the saäme to you, my men. I taäkes it kindly of all o' you that you be doomed—what's the news-paäper word, Wilson?—celebrate—to ccelebrate my birthdaäy i' this fashion. Niver man 'ed better friends, and I will saäy niver master 'ed better men: fur thaw I may ha' fallen out wi' ye sometimes, the fault, mebbe, wur as much mine as yours; and, thaw I says it mysen, niver men 'ed a better master—and I knaws what men be, and what masters be, fur I wur nobbut a laabourer, and now I be a landlord—burn a plowman, and now, as far as money goäs, I be a gentleman, thaw I beänt naw scholard, fur I 'ednt naw time to maake mysen a scholard while I wur maäkin' mysen a gentleman, but I ha taäen good care to turn out boath my darters right down fine laadies.

*Dobson.* An' soä they be.

*1st Farming Man.* Soä they be! soä they be!

*2nd Farming Man.* The Lord bless boath on 'em!

*3rd Farming Man.* An' the saäme to you, Master.

*4th Farming Man.* And long life to boath on 'em. An' the saame to you, Master Steer, likewise.

*Steer.* Thank ye!

*Enter EVA*

Wheer 'asta been?

*Eva (timidly).* Many happy returns of the day, father.

*Steer.* They can't be many, my dear, but I 'oapes they'll be 'appy.

*Dobson.* Why, tha looks haale anew to last to a hoonderd.

*Steer.* An' why shouldn't I last to a hoonderd? Haäle! why shouldn't I be haale? fur thaw I be heighty this very daäy, I niver 'es sa much as one pin's prick of

paain; an' I can taäke my glass along wi' the youngest, fur I niver touched a drop of owt till my oan wedding-daay, an' then I wur turned huppads o' sixty. Why shouldn't I be haäle? I ha' plowed the ten-aäcre—it be mine now—afoor ony o' ye wur burn—ye all knows the ten-aäcre—I mun ha' plowed it moor nor a hoonderd times; hallus hup at sunrise, and I'd drive the plow straait as a line right i' the faäce o' the sun, then back ageän, a-follering my oan shadder—then hup ageän i' the faäce o' the sun. Eh! how the sun 'ud shine, and the larks 'ud sing i' them daäys, and the smell o' the mou'd an' all. Eh! if I could ha' gone on wi' the plowin' nobbut the smell o' the mou'd 'ud ha' maäde ma live as long as Jerusalem.

*Eva.* Methusaleh, father.

*Steer.* Ay, lass, but when thou be as owd as me thou'll put one word fur another as I does.

*Dobson.* But, Steer, thaw thou be haäle anew I seed tha a-limpin' up just now wi' the roomatics i' the knee.

*Steer.* Roomatics! Noä; I laäme't my knee last night running arter a thief. Beant there house-breakers down i' Littlechester, Dobson—doänt ye hear of ony?

*Dobson.* Ay, that there be. Immanuel Goldsmiths was broke into o' Monday night, and ower a hoonderd pounds worth o' rings stolen.

*Steer.* So I thowt, and I heärd the winder—that's the winder at the end o' the passage, that goäs by thy chaumber. (*Turning to EVA.*) Why, lass, what maäkes tha sa red? Did 'e git into thy chaumber?

*Eva.* Father!

*Steer.* Well, I runned arter thief i' the dark, and fell ageän coalscuttle and my kneä gev waay or I'd ha' cotched 'im, but afoor I coomed up he got thruff the winder ageän.

*Eva.* Got thro' the window again?

*Steer.* Ay, but he left the mark o' 'is foot i' the flower-bed; now theer be noän o' my men, thinks I to mysen, 'ud ha' done it 'cep' it were Dan Smith, fur I cotched 'im once a-steälin' coals an' I sent fur 'im, an' I measured his foot wi' the mark i' the bed,

but it wouldn't fit—seeäms to me the mark wur maäde by a Lunnun boot. (*Looks at EVA.*) Why, now, what maäkes tha sa white?

*Eva.* Fright, father!

*Steer.* Maake thyssen eäsy. I'll hev the winder naailed up, and put Towser under it.

*Eva* (*clapping her hands*). No, no, father! Towser'll tear him all to pieces.

*Steer.* Let him keep awaäy, then; but coom, coom! let's be gawin. They ha' broached a barrel of aäle i' the long barn, and the fiddler be theer, and the lads and lasses 'ull hev a dance.

*Eva.* (*Aside.*) Dance! small heart have I to dance. I should seem to be dancing upon a grave.

*Steer.* Wheer be Mr. Edgar? about the premises?

*Dobson.* Hallus about the premises!

*Steer.* So much the better, so much the better. I likes 'im, and Eva likes 'im. Eva can do owt wi' 'im; look for 'im, Eva, and bring 'im to the barn. He 'ant naw pride in 'im, and we'll git 'im to speechify for us arter dinner.

*Eva.* Yes, father!

[*Exit.*]

*Steer.* Coom along then, all the rest o' ye! Churchwarden be a coomin, thaw me and 'im we niver 'grees about the tithe; and Parson mebbe, thaw he niver mended that gap i' the glebe fence as I telled 'im; and Blacksmith, thaw he niver shoes a herse to my likings; and Baäker, thaw I sticks to hoäm-maäde—but all on 'em welcome, all on 'em welcome; and I've hed the long barn cleared out of all the machines, and the sacks, and the taäters, and the mangles, and theer'll be room anew for all o' ye. Foller me.

*All.* Yeas, yeas! Three cheers for Mr. Steer!

[*All exeunt except DOBSON into barn.*]

*Enter EDGAR*

*Dobson* (*who is going, turns*). Squire!—if so be you be a squire.

*Edgar.* Dobbins, I think.

*Dobson.* Dobbins, you thinks; and I thinks ye weärs a Lunnun boot.

*Edgar.* Well?

*Dobson.* And I thinks I'd like to taake the measure o' your foot.

*Edgar.* Ay, if you'd like to measure your own length upon the grass.

*Dobson.* Coom, coom, that's a good un. Why, I could throw four o' ye; but I promised one of the Misses I wouldn't meddle wi' ye, and I weant.

[*Exit into barn.*]

*Edgar.* Jealous of me with Eva! Is it so? Well, tho' I grudge the pretty jewel, that I Have worn, to such a clod, yet that might be

The best way out of it, if the child could keep

Her counsel. I am sure I wish her happy. But I must free myself from this entanglement.

I have all my life before me—so has she—Give her a month or two, and her affections Will flower toward the light in some new face.

Still I am half-afraid to meet her now. She will urge marriage on me. I hate tears. Marriage is but an old tradition. I hate 'Traditions, ever since my narrow father, After my frolic with his tenant's girl, Made younger elder son, violated the whole

Tradition of our land, and left his heir, Born, happily, with some sense of art, to live

By brush and pencil. By and by, when Thought

Comes down among the crowd, and man perceives that

The lost gleam of an after-life but leaves him

A beast of prey in the dark, why then the crowd

May wreak my wrongs upon my wrongers. Marriage!

That fine, fat, hook-nosed uncle of mine, old Harold,

Who leaves me all his land at Littlechester, He, too, would oust me from his will, if I Made such a marriage. And marriage in itself—

The storm is hard at hand will sweep away Thrones, churches, ranks, traditions, customs, marriage

One of the feeblest! Then the man, the woman,

Following their best affinities, will each Bid their old bond farewell with smiles, not tears;

Good wishes, not reproaches; with no fear Of the world's gossiping clamour, and no need

Of veiling their desires.

Conventionalism,

Who shrieks by day at what she does by night,

Would call this vice; but one time's vice may be

The virtue of another; and Vice and Virtue Are but two masks of self; and what hereafter

Shall mark out Vice from Virtue in the gulf Of never-dawning darkness?

*Enter EVA*

My sweet Eva,

Where have you lain in ambush all the morning?

They say your sister, Dora, has return'd, And that should make you happy, if you love her!

But you look troubled.

*Eva.*

Oh, I love her so,

I was afraid of her, and I hid myself.

We never kept a secret from each other; She would have seen at once into my trouble,

And ask'd me what I could not answer.

Oh, Philip,

Father heard you last night. Our savage mastiff,

That all but kill'd the beggar, will be placed

Beneath the window, Philip.

*Edgar.*

Savage, is he?

What matters? Come, give me your hand and kiss me

This beautiful May-morning.

*Eva.*

The most beautiful

May we have had for many years!

*Edgar.*

And here

Is the most beautiful morning of this May. Nay, you must smile upon me! There—you make

The May and morning still more beautiful,



# THE PROMISE OF MAY

## ACT I

You, the most beautiful blossom of the May.

*Eva.* Dear Philip, all the world is beautiful

If we were happy, and could chime in with it.

*Edgar.* True; for the senses, love, are for the world;

That for the senses.

*Eva.* Yes.

*Edgar.* And when the man,

The child of evolution, flings aside

His swaddling-bands, the morals of the tribe,

He, following his own instincts as his God, Will enter on the larger golden age;

No pleasure then taboo'd: for when the tide

Of full democracy has overwhelm'd

This Old world, from that flood will rise the New,

Like the Love-goddess, with no bridal veil, Ring, trinket of the Church, but naked Nature

In all her loveliness.

*Eva.* What are you saying?

*Edgar.* That, if we did not strain to make ourselves

Better and higher than Nature, we might be

As happy as the bees there at their honey In these sweet blossoms.

*Eva.* Yes; how sweet they smell!

*Edgar.* There! let me break some off for you.

*Eva.* My thanks.

But, look, how wasteful of the blossom you are!

One, two, three, four, five, six—you have robb'd poor father

Of ten good apples. Oh, I forgot to tell you He wishes you to dine along with us,

And speak for him after—you that are so clever!

*Edgar.* I grieve I cannot; but, indeed—

*Eva.* What is it?

*Edgar.* Well, business. I must leave you, love, to-day.

*Eva.* Leave me, to-day! And when will you return?

*Edgar.* I cannot tell precisely; but—

*Eva.*

But what?

*Edgar.* I trust, my dear, we shall be always friends.

*Eva.* After all that has gone between us—friends!

What, only friends? [*Drops branch.*]

*Edgar.* All that has gone between us

Should surely make us friends.

*Eva.* But keep us lovers.

*Edgar.* Child, do you love me now?

*Eva.* Yes, now and ever.

*Edgar.* Then you should wish us both to love for ever.

But, if you will bind love to one for ever, Altho' at first he take his bonds for flowers, As years go on, he feels them press upon him,

Begins to flutter in them, and at last

Breaks thro' them, and so flies away for ever;

While, had you left him free use of his wings,

Who knows that he had ever dream'd of flying?

*Eva.* But all that sounds so wicked and so strange;

'Till death us part'—those are the only words,

The true ones—nay, and those not true enough,

For they that love do not believe that death Will part them. Why do you jest with me, and try

To fright me? Tho' you are a gentleman, I but a farmer's daughter—

*Edgar.* Tut! you talk

Old feudalism. When the great Democracy

Makes a new world—

*Eva.* And if you be not jesting,

Neither the old world, nor the new, nor father,

Sister, nor you, shall ever see me more.

*Edgar (moved).* Then—(*aside*) Shall I say it?—(*aloud*) fly with me to-day.

*Eva.* No! Philip, Philip, if you do not marry me,

I shall go mad for utter shame and die.

*Edgar.* Then, if we needs must be conventional,

When shall your parish-parson bawl our  
banns

Before your gaping clowns?

*Eva.* Not in our church—  
I think I scarce could hold my head up  
there.

Is there no other way?

*Edgar.* Yes, if you cared  
To see an over-opulent superstition,  
Then they would grant you what they call  
a licence

To marry. Do you wish it?

*Eva.* Do I wish it?

*Edgar.* In London.

*Eva.* You will write to me?

*Edgar.* I will.

*Eva.* And I will fly to you thro' the  
night, the storm—

Yes, tho' the fire should run along the  
ground,

As once it did in Egypt. Oh, you see,  
I was just out of school, I had no mother—  
My sister far away—and you, a gentleman,  
Told me to trust you: yes, in everything—  
That was the only true love; and I  
trusted—

Oh, yes, indeed, I would have died for you.  
How could you—Oh, how could you?—  
nay, how could I?

But now you will set all right again, and I  
Shall not be made the laughter of the  
village,

And poor old father not die miserable.

*Dora (singing in the distance).*

O joy for the promise of May, of May,  
O joy for the promise of May.

*Edgar.* Speak not so loudly; that must  
be your sister.

You never told her, then, of what has past  
Between us.

*Eva.* Never!

*Edgar.* Do not till I bid you.

*Eva.* No, Philip, no. [*Turns away.*]

*Edgar (moved).* How gracefully there she  
stands

Weeping—the little Niobe! What! we prize  
The statue or the picture all the more  
When we have made them ours! Is she less  
loveable,

Less lovely, being wholly mine? To stay—  
Follow my art among these quiet fields,

Live with these honest folk—

And play the fool!

No! she that gave herself to me so easily  
Will yield herself as easily to another.

*Eva.* Did you speak, Philip?

*Edgar.* Nothing more, farewell.

[*They embrace.*]

*Dora (coming nearer).*

O grief for the promise of May, of May,  
O grief for the promise of May.

*Edgar (still embracing her).* Keep up your  
heart until we meet again.

*Eva.* If that should break before we meet  
again?

*Edgar.* Break! nay, but call for Philip  
when you will,

And he returns.

*Eva.* Heaven hears you, Philip Edgar!

*Edgar (moved).* And he would hear you  
even from the grave.

Heaven curse him if he come not at your  
call! [*Exit.*]

*Enter DORA*

*Dora.* Well, Eva!

*Eva.* Oh, Dora, Dora, how long you have  
been away from home! Oh, how often I  
have wished for you! It seemed to me that  
we were parted for ever.

*Dora.* For ever, you foolish child!  
What's come over you? We parted like the  
brook yonder about the alder island, to  
come together again in a moment and to  
go on together again, till one of us be  
married. But where is this Mr. Edgar  
whom you praised so in your first letters?  
You haven't even mentioned him in your  
last?

*Eva.* He has gone to London.

*Dora.* Ay, child; and you look thin and  
pale. Is it for his absence? Have you  
fancied yourself in love with him? That's  
all nonsense, you know, such a baby as you  
are. But you shall tell me all about it.

*Eva.* Not now—presently. Yes, I have  
been in trouble, but I am happy—I think,  
quite happy now.

*Dora (taking EVA's hand).* Come, then,  
and make them happy in the long barn, for  
father is in his glory, and there is a piece of  
beef like a house-side, and a plum-pudding

# THE PROMISE OF MAY

ACT II

as big as the round haystack. But see they are coming out for the dance already. Well, my child, let us join them.

*Enter all from barn laughing. EVA sits reluctantly under apple tree. STEER enters smoking, sits by EVA.*

*Dance*

## ACT II

*Five years have elapsed between Acts I and II*

### SCENE

*A Meadow. On one side a Pathway going over a rustic Bridge. At back the Farm-house among trees. In the distance a Church Spire.*

DOBSON and DORA

*Dobson.* So the owd uncle i' Coomberland be dead, Miss Dora, beant he?

*Dora.* Yes, Mr. Dobson, I've been attending on his deathbed and his burial.

*Dobson.* It be five year sin' ye went afoor to him, and it seems to me nobbut t'other day. Hesn't he left ye nowt?

*Dora.* No, Mr. Dobson.

*Dobson.* But he were mighty fond o' ye, warn't he?

*Dora.* Fonder of poor Eva—like everybody else.

*Dobson (handing DORA basket of roses).* Not like me, Miss Dora; and I ha' browt these roses to ye—I forgits what they calls 'em, but I hallus gi'ed soom on 'em to Miss Eva at this time o' year. Will ya taake 'em? fur Miss Eva, she set the bush by my dairy winder afoor she went to school at Littlechester—so I allus browt soom on 'em to her; and now she be gone, will ye taake 'em, Miss Dora?

*Dora.* I thank you. They tell me that yesterday you mentioned her name too suddenly before my father. See that you do not do so again!

*Dobson.* Noä; I knows a deäl better now. I seed how the owd man wur vext.

*Dora.* I take them, then, for Eva's sake.

*[Takes basket, places some in her dress.]*

*Dobson.* Eva's saake. Yeas. Poor gel, poor

gel! I can't abear to think on 'er now, fur I'd ha' done owt fur 'er mysen; an' ony o' Steer's men, an' ony o' my men 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, an' all the parish 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, fur we was all on us proud on 'er, an' them theer be soom of her oän roses, an' she wur as sweet as ony on 'em—the Lord bless 'er—'er oän sen; an' weänt ye taake 'em now, Miss Dora, fur 'er saake an' fur my saake an' all?

*Dora.* Do you want them back again?

*Dobson.* Noa, noä! Keep 'em. But I hed a word to saay to ye.

*Dora.* Why, Farmer, you should be in the hayfield looking after your men; you couldn't have more splendid weather.

*Dobson.* I be a going theer; but I thowt I'd bring tha them roses fust. The weather's well anew, but the glass be a bit shaaky. S'iver we've led moast on it.

*Dora.* Ay! but you must not be too sudden with it either, as you were last year, when you put it in green, and your stack caught fire.

*Dobson.* I were insured, Miss, an' I lost nowt by it. But I weant be too sudden wi' it; and I feel sewer, Miss Dora, that I ha' been noan too sudden wi' you, fur I ha' sarved for ye well nigh as long as the man sarved for 'is sweet'art i' Scriptur'. Weänt ye gi'e me a kind answer at last?

*Dora.* I have no thought of marriage, my friend. We have been in such grief these five years, not only on my sister's account, but the ill success of the farm, and the debts, and my father's breaking down, and his blindness. How could I think of leaving him?

*Dobson.* Eh, but I be well to do; and if ye would nobbut hev me, I would taake the owd blind man to my oän fireside. You should hev him allus wi' ye.

*Dora.* You are generous, but it cannot be. I cannot love you; nay, I think I never can be brought to love any man. It seems to me that I hate men, ever since my sister left us. Oh, see here. *(Pulls out a letter.)* I wear it next my heart. Poor sister, I had it five years ago. 'Dearest Dora,—I have lost myself, and am lost for ever to you and my poor father. I thought Mr. Edgar the

best of men, and he has proved himself the worst. Seek not for me, or you may find me at the bottom of the river.—EVA.

*Dobson.* Be that my fault?

*Dora.* No; but how should I, with this grief still at my heart, take to the milking of your cows, the fattening of your calves, the making of your butter, and the managing of your poultry?

*Dobson.* Naáy, but I hev an owd woman as 'ud see to all that; and you should sit i' your oån parlour quite like a laády, ye should!

*Dora.* It cannot be.

*Dobson.* And plaáy the pianner, if ye liked, all daay long, like a laády, ye should an' all.

*Dora.* It cannot be.

*Dobson.* And I would loove tha moor nor ony gentleman 'ud loove tha.

*Dora.* No, no; it cannot be.

*Dobson.* And p'raps ye hears 'at I soom-times taakes a drop too much; but that be all along o' you, Miss, because ye weánt hev me; but, if ye would, I could put all that o' one side eásy anew.

*Dora.* Cannot you understand plain words, Mr. Dobson? I tell you, it cannot be.

*Dobson.* Eh, lass! Thy feyther eddicated his darters to marry gentlefoalk, and see what's coomed on it.

*Dora.* That is enough, Farmer Dobson. You have shown me that, though fortune had born *you* into the estate of a gentleman, you would still have been Farmer Dobson. You had better attend to your hayfield. Good afternoon. *[Exit.]*

*Dobson.* 'Farmer Dobson!' Well, I be Farmer Dobson; but I thinks Farmer Dobson's dog 'ud ha' knaw'd better nor to cast her sister's misfortin inter 'er teeth arter she'd been a-reádin' me the letter wi' 'er voice a-shaákin', and the drop in 'er eye. Theer she goás! Shall I foller 'er and ax 'er to maáke it up? Noá, not yet. Let 'er cool upon it; I likes 'er all the better fur taákin' me down, like a laády, as she be. Farmer Dobson! I be Farmer Dobson, sewer anew; but if iver I cooms upo' Gentleman Hedgar ageán, and doánt laáy my cartwhip athurt

'is shou'ders, why then I beánt Farmer Dobson, but summun else—blaáme't if I beánt!

*Enter HAYMAKERS with a load of hay*

The last on it, eh?

*1st Haymaker.* Yeas.

*Dobson.* Hoám wi' it, then.

*[Exit surlily.]*

*1st Haymaker.* Well, it be the last loád hoam.

*2nd Haymaker.* Yeas, an' owd Dobson should be glad on it. What maákes 'im allus sa glum?

*Sally Allen.* Glum! he be wuss nor glum. He coom'd up to me yisterdaay i' the haay-field, when mca and my sweet'art was a workin' along o' one side wi' one another, and he sent 'im awaáy to t'other end o' the field; and when I axed 'im why, he telled me 'at sweet'arts niver worked well to-gither; and I telled 'im 'at sweet'arts allus worked best together; and then he called me a rude naame, and I can't abide 'im.

*James.* Why, lass, doant tha know he be sweet upo' Dora Steer, and she weant sa much as look at 'im? And whenever 'e sees two sweet'arts together like thou and me, Sally, he be fit to bust hissen wi' spites and jealousies.

*Sally.* Let 'im bust hissen, then, for owt I cares.

*1st Haymaker.* Well but, as I said afoor, it be the last loád hoam; do thou and thy sweet'art sing us hoám to supper—'The Last Loád Hoam.'

*All.* Ay! 'The Last Loád Hoam.'

### Song

What did ye do, and what did ye saay,  
Wi' the wild white rose, an' the woodbine  
sa gaay,

An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa  
blue—

What did ye saáy, and what did ye do,  
When ye thowt there were nawbody  
watchin' o' you,

And you an' your Sally was forkin' the  
haáy,

At the end of the daáy,  
For the last loád hoám?

What did we do, and what did we saäy,  
Wi, the briar sa green, an' the willer sa  
graay,  
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa  
blue—

Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you,  
What we mowt saay, and what we mowt do,  
When me an' my Sally was forkin' the  
haäy,  
At the end of the daäy,  
For the last load hoam?

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,  
Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers at  
plaaay,  
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa  
blue?  
Why, coom then, owd feller, I'll tell it to  
you;  
For me an' my Sally we swear'd to be true,  
To be true to each other, let 'appen what  
maay,  
Till the end of the daäy  
And the last load hoam.

*All.* Well sung!

*James.* Fanny be the naame i' the song,  
but I swopt it fur *she*. [*Pointing to SALLY.*]

*Sally.* Let ma aloan afoor foalk, wilt tha?

*1st Haymaker.* Ye shall sing that agean  
to-night, fur owd Dobson 'll gi'e us a bit  
o' supper.

*Sally.* I weant goa to owd Dobson; he  
wur rude to me i' tha haayfield, and he'll be  
rude to me agean to-night. Owd Steer's  
gotten all his grass down and wants a hand,  
and I'll goa to him.

*1st Haymaker.* Owd Steer gi'es nubbut  
cowd tea to 'is men, and owd Dobson gi'es  
beer.

*Sally.* But I'd like owd Steer's cowd tea  
better nor Dobson's beer. Good-bye.

[*Going.*]

*James.* Gi'e us a buss fust, lass.

*Sally.* I tell'd tha to let ma aloan!

*James.* Why, wasn't thou and me a-bus-  
sin' o' one another t'other side o' the  
haaycock, when owd Dobson coom'd upo'  
us? I can't let tha aloan if I would, Sally.

[*Offering to kiss her.*]

*Sally.* Git along wi' ye, do! [*Exit.*]

[*All laugh; exeunt singing.*]

'To be true to each other, let 'appen what  
maäy,  
Till the end o' the daäy  
An' the last load hoam.'

*Enter HAROLD*

*Harold.* Not Harold! 'Philip Edgar,  
Philip Edgar!'

Her phantom call'd me by the name she  
loved.

I told her I should hear her from the grave.  
Ay! yonder is her casement. I remember  
Her bright face beaming starlike down  
upon me

Thro' that rich cloud of blossom. Since I  
left her

Here weeping, I have ranged the world,  
and sat

Thro' every sensual course of that full  
feast

That leaves but emptiness.

*Song*

'To be true to each other, let 'appen what  
maäy,  
To the end o' the daäy  
An' the last load hoam.'

*Harold.* Poor Eva! O my God, if man be  
only

A willy-nilly current of sensations—  
Reaction needs must follow revel—yet—  
Why feel remorse, he, knowing that he  
*must* have

Moved in the iron grooves of Destiny?

Remorse then is a part of Destiny,

Nature a liar, making us feel guilty

Of her own faults.

My grandfather—of him  
They say, that women—

O this mortal house,  
Which we are born into, is haunted by  
The ghosts of the dead passions of dead  
men;

And these take flesh again with our own  
flesh,

And bring us to confusion.

He was only  
A poor philosopher who call'd the mind

Of children a blank page, a *tabula rasa*.

There, there, is written in invisible inks

'Lust, Prodigality, Covetousness, Craft,  
Cowardice, Murder'—and the heat and  
fire  
Of life will bring them out, and black  
enough,  
So the child grow to manhood: better  
death  
With our first wail than life—

*Song (further off)*  
'Till the end o' the daäy  
An' the last loäð hoäm,  
Load hoam.'

This bridge again! (*Steps on the bridge.*)

How often have I stood  
With Eva here! The brook among its  
flowers!  
Forget-me-not, meadowsweet, willow-  
herb.

I had some smattering of science then,  
Taught her the learned names, anatomized  
The flowers for her—and now I only wish  
This pool were deep enough, that I might  
plunge  
And lose myself for ever.

*Enter DAN SMITH (singing)*

Gee oop! whoa! Gee oop! whoa!  
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä  
'Thruf slush an' squad  
When roads was bad,  
But hallus ud stop at the Vine-an'-the-  
Hop,  
Fur boath on 'em knawcd as well as  
mysen

That beer be as good fur 'crses as men.

Gee oop! whoa! Gee oop! whoa!

Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goa.

The beer's gotten oop into my 'eäð.  
S'iver I mun git along back to the farm,  
fur she tell'd ma to taake the cart to Little-  
chester.

*Enter DORA*

Half an hour late! why are you loitering  
here? Away with you at once.

[*Exit DAN SMITH.*]

(*Seeing HAROLD on bridge*)

Some madman, is it,  
Gesticulating there upon the bridge?  
I am half afraid to pass.

*Harold.* Sometimes I wonder,  
When man has surely learnt at last that all  
His old-world faith, the blossom of his  
youth,  
Has faded, falling fruitless—whether then  
All of us, all at once, may not be seized  
With some fierce passion, not so much for  
Death

As against Life! all, all, into the dark—  
No more!—and science now could drug  
and balm us  
Back into nescience with as little pain  
As it is to fall asleep.

This beggarly life,  
This poor, flat, hedged-in field—no  
distance—this  
Hollow Pandora-box,  
With all the pleasures flown, not even Hope  
Left at the bottom!

Superstitious fool,  
What brought me here? To see her grave?  
her ghost?

Her ghost is everyway about me here.

*Dora (coming forward).* Allow me, sir, to  
pass you.

*Harold.* Eva!

*Dora.* Eva!

*Harold.* What are you? Where do you  
come from?

*Dora.* From the farm

I here, close at hand.

*Harold.* Are you—you are—that

*Dora,*

The sister. I have heard of you. The like-  
ness

Is very striking.

*Dora.* You knew Eva, then?

*Harold.* Yes—I was thinking of her  
when—O yes,  
Many years back, and never since have met  
Her equal for pure innocence of nature,  
And loveliness of feature.

*Dora.* No, nor I.

*Harold.* Except, indeed, I have found it  
once again

In your own self.

*Dora.* You flatter me. Dear Eva  
Was always thought the prettier.

*Harold.* And her charm  
Of voice is also yours; and I was brooding  
Upon a great unhappiness when you spoke.

*Dora.* Indeed, you seem'd in trouble, sir.

*Harold.* And you  
Seem my good angel who may help me  
from it.

*Dora (aside).* How worn he looks, poor  
man! who is it, I wonder.

How can I help him? (*Aloud.*) Might I ask  
your name?

*Harold.* Harold.

*Dora.* I never heard her mention you.

*Harold.* I met her first at a farm in  
Cumberland—

Her uncle's.

*Dora.* She was there six years ago.

*Harold.* And if she never mention'd me,  
perhaps

The painful circumstances which I heard—  
I will not vex you by repeating them—  
Only last week at Littlechester, drove me  
From out her memory. She has dis-  
appear'd,

They told me, from the farm—and darker  
news.

*Dora.* She has disappear'd, poor darling,  
from the world—

Left but one dreadful line to say, that we  
Should find her in the river; and we  
dragg'd

The Littlechester river all in vain:

Have sorrow'd for her all these years in  
vain.

And my poor father, utterly broken down  
By losing her—she was his favourite  
child—

Has let his farm, all his affairs, I fear,  
But for the slender help that I can give,  
Fall into ruin. Ah! that villain, Edgar,  
If he should ever show his face among us,  
Our men and boys would hoot him, stone  
him, hunt him

With pitchforks off the farm, for all of  
them

Loved her, and she was worthy of all love.

*Harold.* They say, we should forgive our  
enemies.

*Dora.* Ay, if the wretch were dead I  
might forgive him;

We know not whether he be dead or living.

*Harold.* What Edgar?

*Dora.* Philip Edgar of Toft Hall  
In Somerset. Perhaps you know him?

*Harold.*

Slightly.

(*Aside.*) Ay, for how slightly have I known  
myself.

*Dora.* This Edgar, then, is living?

*Harold.* Living? well—

One Philip Edgar of Toft Hall in Somers-  
set

Is lately dead.

*Dora.* Dead!—is there more than one?

*Harold.* Nay—now—not one, (*aside*) for  
I am Philip Harold.

*Dora.* That one, is he then—dead!

*Harold. (Aside.)* My father's death,  
Let her believe it mine; this, for the  
moment,

Will leave me a free field.

*Dora.* Dead! and this world

Is brighter for his absence as that other  
Is darker for his presence.

*Harold.* Is not this

To speak too pitilessly of the dead?

*Dora.* My five-years' anger cannot die at  
once,

Not all at once with death and him. I  
trust

I shall forgive him—by-and-by—not now.  
O sir, you seem to have a heart; if you  
Had seen us that wild morning when we  
found

Her bed unslept in, storm and shower  
lashing

Her casement, her poor spaniel wailing  
for her,

That desolate letter, blotted with her tears,  
Which told us we should never see her  
more—

Our old nurse crying as if for her own  
child,

My father stricken with his first paralysis,  
And then with blindness—had you been  
one of us

And seen all this, then you would know it  
is not

So easy to forgive—even the dead.

*Harold.* But sure am I that of your  
gentleness

You will forgive him. She, you mourn for,  
seem'd

A miracle of gentleness—would not blur  
A moth's wing by the touching; would not  
crush

The fly that drew her blood; and, were she living,  
Would not—if penitent—have denied him  
*her*

Forgiveness. And perhaps the man himself,  
When hearing of that piteous death, has  
suffer'd

More than we know. But wherefore waste  
your heart

In looking on a chill and changeless Past?  
Iron will fuse, and marble melt; the Past  
Remains the Past. But you are young, and  
—pardon me—

As lovely as your sister. Who can tell  
What golden hours, with what full hands,  
may be

Waiting you in the distance? Might I call  
Upon your father—I have seen the world—  
And cheer his blindness with a traveller's  
tales?

*Dora.* Call if you will, and when you  
will. I cannot

Well answer for my father; but if you  
Can tell me anything of our sweet Eva  
When in her brighter girlhood, I at least  
Will bid you welcome, and will listen to  
you.

Now I must go.

*Harold.* But give me first your hand:  
I do not dare, like an old friend, to shake it.  
I kiss it as a prelude to that privilege  
When you shall know me better.

*Dora.* (*Aside.*) How beautiful  
His manners are, and how unlike the  
farmer's!

You are staying here?

*Harold.* Yes, at the wayside inn  
Close by that alder-island in your brook,  
‘The Angler’s Home.’

*Dora.* Are you one?

*Harold.* No, but I  
Take some delight in sketching, and the  
country

Has many charms, altho’ the inhabitants  
Seem semi-barbarous.

*Dora.* I am glad it pleases you;  
Yet I, born here, not only love the country,  
But its inhabitants too; and you, I doubt  
not,

Would take to them as kindly, if you cared  
To live some time among them.

*Harold.* If I did,  
Then one at least of its inhabitants  
Might have more charm for me than all the  
country.

*Dora.* That one, then, should be grateful  
for your preference.

*Harold.* I cannot tell, tho’ standing in  
her presence.

(*Aside.*) She colours!

*Dora.* Sir!

*Harold.* Be not afraid of me,  
For these are no conventional flourishes.  
I do most earnestly assure you that  
Your likeness—

[*Shouts and cries without.*

*Dora.* What was that? my poor blind  
father—

*Enter FARMING MAN*

*Farming Man.* Miss Dora, Dan Smith’s  
cart hes runned ower a laady i’ the holler  
laane, and they ha’ ta’en the body up inter  
your chaumber, and they be all a-callin’  
for ye.

*Dora.* The body!—Heavens! I come!

*Harold.* But you are trembling.  
Allow me to go with you to the farm.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter DOBSON*

*Dobson.* What feller wur it as ‘a been  
a-talkin’ fur haäfe an hour wi’ my Dora?  
(*Looking after him.*) Secams I ommost  
knaws the back on ‘im—drest like a gentle-  
man, too. Damn all gentlemen, says I! I  
should ha’ thowt they’d hed anew o’ gentle-  
foalk, as I telled ‘er to-daay when she fell  
foul upo’ me.

Minds ma o’ summun. I could swear to  
that; but that be all one, fur I haates ‘im  
afoor I knaws what ‘e be. Theer! he turns  
round. Philip Hedgar o’ Soomerset! Philip  
Hedgar o’ Soomerset!—Noa—yeas—thaw  
the feller’s gone and maäde such a litter of  
his faäce.

Eh lad, if it be thou, I’ll Philip tha!  
a-plaayin’ the saäme gaäme wi’ my Dora—  
I’ll Soomerset tha.

I’d like to drag ‘im thruff the hersepond,  
and she to be a-lookin’ at it. I’d like to  
leather ‘im black and blue, and she to be



# THE PROMISE OF MAY

ACT II

a-laughin' at it. I'd like to fell 'im as dead as a bullock! (*Glenching his fist.*)

But what 'ud she saay to that? She telled me once not to meddle wi' 'im, and now she be fallen out wi' ma, and I can't coom at 'er.

It mun be *him*. Noa! Fur she'd niver 'a been talkin' haafe an hour wi' the devil 'at killed her oan sister, or she beant Dora Steer.

Yea! Fur she niver knawed 'is faace when 'e wur 'ere afoor; but I'll maake 'er knaw! I'll maake 'er knaw!

*Enter HAROLD*

Naäy, but I mun git out on 'is waäy now, or I shall be the death on 'im. [*Exit.*]

*Harold.* How the clown glared at me! that Dobbins, is it,

With whom I used to jar? but can he trace me

Thro' five years' absence, and my change of name,

The tan of southern summers and the beard?

I may as well avoid him.

*Ladylike!*

Lilylike in her stateliness and sweetness! How came she by it?—a daughter of the fields,

This Dora!

She gave her hand, unask'd, at the farm-gate;

I almost think she half return'd the pressure

Of mine. What, I that held the orange blossom

Dark as the yew? but may not those, who march

Before their age, turn back at times, and make

Courtesy to custom? and now the stronger motive,

Misnamed free-will—the crowd would call it conscience—

Moves me—to what? I am dreaming; for the past

Look'd thro' the present, Eva's eyes thro' hers—

A spell upon me! Surely I loved Eva More than I knew! or is it but the past

That brightens in retiring? Oh, last night, Tired, pacing my new lands at Littlechester,

I dozed upon the bridge, and the black river Flow'd thro' my dreams—if dreams they were. She rose

From the foul flood and pointed toward the farm,

And her cry rang to me across the years, 'I call you, Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!

Come, you will set all right again, and father

Will not die miserable.' I could make his age

A comfort to him—so be more at peace With mine own self. Some of my former

friends Would find my logic faulty; let them. Colour

Flows thro' my life again, and I have lighted On a new pleasure. Anyhow we must

Move in the line of least resistance when The stronger motive rules.

But she hates Edgar. May not this Dobbins, or some other, spy

Edgar in Harold? Well then, I must make her

Love Harold first, and then she will forgive Edgar for Harold's sake. She said herself

She would forgive him, by-and-by, not now—

For her own sake *then*, if not for mine—not now—

But by-and-by.

*Enter DOBSON behind*

*Dobson.* By-and-by—eh, lad, dosta know this paaper? Ye dropt it upo' the road.

'Philip Edgar, Esq.' Ay, you be a pretty squire. I ha' fun' ye out, I hev. Eh, lad,

dosta know what tha means wi' by-and-by? Fur if ye be goin' to sarve our Dora

as ye sarved our Eva—then, by-and-by, if she weant listen to me when I be a-tryin'

to saave 'er—if she weant—look to thysen, for, by the Lord, I'd think na moor o'

maakin' an end o' tha nor a carrion crow—noa—thaw they hanged ma at 'Size fur it.

*Harold.* Dobbins, I think!

*Dobson.* I beant Dobbins.

*Harold.* Nor am I Edgar, my good fellow.

*Dobson.* 'Tha lies! What hasta been saayin' to my Dora?

*Harold.* I have been telling her of the death of one Philip Edgar of Toft Hall, Somerset.

*Dobson.* 'Tha lies!

*Harold* (*pulling out a newspaper*). Well, my man, it seems that you can read. Look there—under the deaths.

*Dobson.* 'O' the 17th, Philip Edgar, o' Toft Hall, Soomerset.' How coom thou to be sa like 'im, then?

*Harold.* Naturally enough; for I am closely related to the dead man's family.

*Dobson.* An' ow coom thou by the letter to 'im?

*Harold.* Naturally again; for as I used to transact all his business for him, I had to look over his letters. Now then, see these (*takes out letters*). Half a score of them, all directed to me—Harold.

*Dobson.* 'Arold! 'Arold! 'Arold, so they be.

*Harold.* My name is Harold! Good day, Dobbins! [*Exit.*

*Dobson.* 'Arold! The feller's clean daazed, an' maazed, an' maated, an' muddled ma. Dead! It mun be true, fur it wur i' print as black as owt. Naay, but 'Good daay, Dobbins.' Why, that wur the very twang on 'im. Eh, lad, but whether thou be Hedgar, or Hedgar's business man, thou hesn't naw business 'ere wi' my Dora, as I knows on, an' whether thou calls thyssen Hedgar or Harold, if thou stick to she I'll stick to thee—stick to tha like a weasel to a rabbit, I will. Ay! and I'd like to shoot tha like a rabbit an' all. 'Good daay, Dobbins.' Dang tha!

## ACT III

## SCENE

*A Room in Steer's House. Door leading into Bedroom at the back*

*Dora* (*ringing a handbell*). Milly!

*Enter MILLY*

*Milly.* The little 'ymn? Yeas, Miss; but I wur so ta'en up wi' leadin' the owd man

about all the blessed murnin' 'at I ha' nobbut larned mysen haafe on it.

'O man, forgive thy mortal foe,  
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;  
For all the souls on earth that live  
To be forgiven must forgive.  
Forgive him seventy times and seven;  
For all the blessed souls in Heaven  
Are both forgivers and forgiven.'

But I'll git the book agean, and larn mysen the rest, and saay it to ye afoor dark; ye ringed fur that, Miss, didn't ye?

*Dora.* No, Milly; but if the farming men be come for their wages, to send them up to me.

*Milly.* Yeas, Miss. [*Exit.*

*Dora* (*sitting at desk counting money*). Enough at any rate for the present. (*Enter FARMING MEN.*) Good afternoon, my friends. I am sorry Mr. Steer still continues too unwell to attend to you, but the schoolmaster looked to the paying you your wages when I was away, didn't he?

*Men.* Yeas; and thanks to ye.

*Dora.* Some of our workmen have left us, but he sent me an alphabetical list of those that remain, so, Allen, I may as well begin with you.

*Allen* (*with his hand to his ear*). Halfabiticall! Taake one o' the young 'uns fust, Miss, fur I be a bit deaf, and I wur hallus scaared by a big word; leastwaays, I should be wi' a lawyer.

*Dora.* I spoke of your names, Allen, as they are arranged here (*shows book*)—according to their first letters.

*Allen.* Letters! Yeas, I sees now. Them be what they larns the childer' at school, but I were burn afoor schoolin'-time.

*Dora.* But, Allen, tho' you can't read, you could whitewash that cottage of yours where your grandson had the fever.

*Allen.* I'll hev it done o' Monday.

*Dora.* Else if the fever spread, the parish will have to thank you for it.

*Allen.* Mea? why, it be the Lord's doin', noan o' mine; d'ye think I'd gi'e 'em the fever? But I thanks ye all the saame, Miss. (*Takes money.*)

*Dora* (*calling out names*). Higgins, Jackson,

Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth! (*All take money.*) Did you find that you worked at all the worse upon the cold tea than you would have done upon the beer?

*Higgins.* Noä, Miss; we worked naw wuss upo' the cowl tea; but we'd ha' worked better upo' the beer.

*Dora.* Come, come, you worked well enough, and I am much obliged to all of you. There's for you, and you, and you. Count the money and see if it's all right.

*Men.* All right, Miss; and thank ye kindly.

[*Exeunt LUSCOMBE, NOKES, OLDHAM, SKIPWORTH.*]

*Dora.* Dan Smith, my father and I forgave you stealing our coals.

[*DAN SMITH advances to DORA.*]

*Dan Smith (bellowing).* Whoy, O lor, Miss! that wur sa long back, and the walls sa thin, and the winders brokken, and the weather sa cowl, and my missus a-gittin' ower 'er lyin'-in.

*Dora.* Didn't I say that we had forgiven you? But, Dan Smith, they tell me that you—and you have six children—spent all your last Saturday's wages at the ale-house; that you were stupid drunk all Sunday, and so ill in consequence all Monday, that you did not come into the hay-field. Why should I pay you your full wages?

*Dan Smith.* I be ready to taäke the pledge.

*Dora.* And as ready to break it again. Besides it was you that were driving the cart—and I fear you were tipsy then, too—when you lamed the lady in the hollow lane.

*Dan Smith (bellowing).* O lor, Miss! noä, noä, noä! Ye sees the holler laäne be hallus sa dark i' the arternoon, and wheere the big eshtree cuts athurt it, it gi'es a turn like, and 'ow should I see to laame the laädy, and meä coomin' along pretty sharp an' all?

*Dora.* Well, there are your wages; the next time you waste them at a pot-house you get no more from me. (*Exit DAN SMITH.*) Sally Allen, you worked for Mr. Dobson, didn't you?

*Sally (advancing).* Yeas, Miss; but he wur so rough wi' ma, I couldn't abide 'im.

*Dora.* Why should he be rough with you? You are as good as a man in the hay-field. What's become of your brother?

*Sally.* 'Listed for a soadger, Miss, i' the Queen's Real Hard Tillery.

*Dora.* And your sweetheart—when are you and he to be married?

*Sally.* At Michaelmas, Miss, please God.

*Dora.* You are an honest pair. I will come to your wedding.

*Sally.* An' I thanks ye fur that, Miss, moor nor fur the waage.

(*Going—returns.*) 'A cotched ma about the waaist, Miss, when 'e wur 'ere afoor, an' axed ma to be 'is little sweetart, an soa I knaw'd 'im when I seed 'im agean an I telled feyther on 'im.

*Dora.* What is all this, Allen?

*Allen.* Why, Miss Dora, meä and my maates, us three, we wants to hev three words wi' ye.

*Higgins.* That be 'im, and meä, Miss.

*Jackson.* An' meä, Miss.

*Allen.* An' we weänt mention naw naames, we'd as lief talk o' the Divil afoor ye as 'im, fur they says the master goas clean off his 'ead when he 'ears the naame on 'im; but us three, arter Sally'd telled us on 'im, we fun' 'im out a-walkin' i' West Field wi' a white 'at, nine o'clock, upo' Tuesday murnin', and all on us, wi' your leave, we wants to leather 'im.

*Dora.* Who?

*Allen.* Him as did the mischief here, five year' sin'.

*Dora.* Mr. Edgar?

*Allen.* Theer, Miss! You ha' naämed 'im—not me.

*Dora.* He's dead, man—dead; gone to his account—dead and buried.

*Allen.* I beant sa sewer o' that, fur Sally knaw'd 'im; Now then?

*Dora.* Yes; it was in the Somersetshire papers.

*Allen.* Then yon mun be his brother, an' we'll leather 'im.

*Dora.* I never heard that he had a brother. Some foolish mistake of Sally's; but what! would you beat a man for his

brother's fault? That were a wild justice indeed. Let bygones be bygones. Go home! Good-night! (*All exeunt.*) I have once more paid them all. The work of the farm will go on still, but for how long? We are almost at the bottom of the well: little more to be drawn from it—and what then? Encumbered as we are, who would lend us anything? We shall have to sell all the land, which Father, for a whole life, has been getting together, again, and that, I am sure, would be the death of him. What am I to do? Farmer Dobson, were I to marry him, has promised to keep our heads above water; and the man has doubtless a good heart, and a true and lasting love for me: yet—though I can be sorry for him—as the good Sally says, 'I can't abide him'—almost brutal, and matched with my Harold is like a hedge thistle by a garden rose. But then, he, too—will he ever be of one faith with his wife? which is my dream of a true marriage. Can I fancy him kneeling with me, and uttering the same prayer; standing up side by side with me, and singing the same hymn? I fear not. Have I done wisely, then, in accepting him? But may not a girl's love-dream have too much romance in it to be realised all at once, or altogether, or anywhere but in Heaven? And yet I had once a vision of a pure and perfect marriage, where the man and the woman, only differing as the stronger and the weaker, should walk hand in hand together down this valley of tears, as they call it so truly, to the grave at the bottom, and lie down there together in the darkness which would seem but for a moment, to be wakened again together by the light of the resurrection, and no more partings for ever and for ever. (*Walks up and down. She sings.*)

'O happy lark, that warblest high  
Above thy lowly nest,  
O brook, that brawlest merrily by  
'Thro' fields that once were blest,  
O tower spiring to the sky,  
O graves in daisies drest,  
O Love and Life, how weary am I,  
And how I long for rest.'

There, there, I am a fool! Tears! I have sometimes been moved to tears by a chapter of fine writing in a novel; but what have I to do with tears now? All depends on me—Father, this poor girl, the farm, everything; and they both love me—I am all in all to both; and he loves me too, I am quite sure of that. Courage, courage! and all will go well. (*Goes to bedroom door; opens it.*) How dark your room is! Let me bring you in here where there is still full daylight. (*Brings EVA forward.*) Why, you look better.

*Eva.* And I feel so much better, that I trust I may be able by-and-by to help you in the business of the farm; but I must not be known yet. Has anyone found me out, Dora?

*Dora.* Oh, no; you kept your veil too close for that when they carried you in; since then, no one has seen you but myself.

*Eva.* Yes—this Milly.

*Dora.* Poor blind Father's little guide, Milly, who came to us three years after you were gone, how should she know you? But now that you have been brought to us as it were from the grave, dearest Eva, and have been here so long, will you not speak with Father to-day?

*Eva.* Do you think that I may? No, not yet. I am not equal to it yet.

*Dora.* Why? Do you still suffer from your fall in the hollow lane?

*Eva.* Bruised; but no bones broken.

*Dora.* I have always told Father that the huge old ashtree there would cause an accident some day; but he would never cut it down, because one of the Steers had planted it there in former times.

*Eva.* If it had killed one of the Steers there the other day, it might have been better for her, for him, and for you.

*Dora.* Come, come, keep a good heart! Better for me! That's good. How better for me?

*Eva.* You tell me you have a lover. Will he not fly from you if he learn the story of my shame and that I am still living?

*Dora.* No; I am sure that when we are married he will be willing that you and Father should live with us; for, indeed, he tells me that he met you once in the old

times, and was much taken with you, my dear.

*Eva.* Taken with me; who was he? Have you told him I am here?

*Dora.* No; do you wish it?

*Eva.* See, Dora; you yourself are ashamed of me (*weeps*), and I do not wonder at it.

*Dora.* But I should wonder at myself if it were so. Have we not been all in all to one another from the time when we first peeped into the bird's nest, waded in the brook, ran after the butterflies, and prattled to each other that we would marry fine gentlemen, and played at being fine ladies?

*Eva.* That last was my Father's fault, poor man. And this lover of yours—this Mr. Harold—is a gentleman?

*Dora.* That he is, from head to foot. I do believe I lost my heart to him the very first time we met, and I love him so much—

*Eva.* Poor Dora!

*Dora.* That I dare not tell him how much I love him.

*Eva.* Better not. Has he offered you marriage, this gentleman?

*Dora.* Could I love him else?

*Eva.* And are you quite sure that after marriage this gentleman will not be ashamed of his poor farmer's daughter among the ladies in his drawing-room?

*Dora.* Shamed of me in a drawing-room! Wasn't Miss Vavasour, our schoolmistress at Littlechester, a lady born? Were not our fellow-pupils all ladies? Wasn't dear mother herself at least by one side a lady? Can't I speak like a lady; pen a letter like a lady; talk a little French like a lady; play a little like a lady? Can't a girl when she loves her husband, and he her, make herself anything he wishes her to be? Shamed of me in a drawing-room, indeed! See here! 'I hope your Lordship is quite recovered of your gout?' (*Curtseys.*) 'Will your Ladyship ride to cover to-day?' (*Curtseys.*) I can recommend our Voltigeur.' 'I am sorry that we could not attend your Grace's party on the 10th!' (*Curtseys.*) There, I am glad my nonsense has made you smile!

*Eva.* I have heard that 'your Lordship,' and 'your Ladyship,' and 'your Grace' are all growing old-fashioned!

*Dora.* But the love of sister can never be old-fashioned. I have been unwilling to trouble you with questions, but you seem somewhat better to-day. We found a letter in your bedroom torn into bits. I couldn't make it out. What was it?

*Eva.* From him! from him! He said we had been most happy together, and he trusted that some time we should meet again, for he had not forgotten his promise to come when I called him. But that was a mockery, you know, for he gave me no address, and there was no word of marriage; and, O Dora, he signed himself 'Yours gratefully'—fancy, Dora, 'gratefully'! 'Yours gratefully'!

*Dora.* Infamous wretch! (*Aside.*) Shall I tell her he is dead? No; she is still too feeble.

*Eva.* Hark! Dora, some one is coming. I cannot and I will not see anybody.

*Dora.* It is only Milly.

*Enter MILLY, with basket of roses*

*Dora.* Well, Milly, why do you come in so roughly? The sick lady here might have been asleep.

*Milly.* Please, Miss, Mr. Dobson told me to saay he's browt some of Miss Eva's roses for the sick laady to smell on.

*Dora.* Take them, dear. Say that the sick lady thanks him! Is he here?

*Milly.* Yeas, Miss; and he wants to speak to ye partic'lar.

*Dora.* Tell him I cannot leave the sick lady just yet.

*Milly.* Yeas, Miss; but he says he wants to tell ye summut very partic'lar.

*Dora.* Not to-day. What are you staying for?

*Milly.* Why, Miss, I be afeard I shall set him a-swearin like onythink.

*Dora.* And what harm will that do you, so that you do not copy his bad manners? Go, child. (*Exit MILLY.*) But, Eva, why did you write 'Seek me at the bottom of the river'?

*Eva.* Why? because I meant it!—that dreadful night! that lonely walk to Little-

chester, the rain beating in my face all the way, dead midnight when I came upon the bridge; the river, black, slimy, swirling under me in the lamplight, by the rotten wharfs—but I was so mad, that I mounted upon the parapet—

*Dora.* You make me shudder!

*Eva.* To fling myself over, when I heard a voice, 'Girl, what are you doing there?' It was a Sister of Mercy, come from the death-bed of a pauper, who had died in his misery blessing God, and the Sister took me to her house, and bit by bit—for she promised secrecy—I told her all.

*Dora.* And what then?

*Eva.* She would have persuaded me to come back here, but I couldn't. Then she got me a place as nursery governess, and when the children grew too old for me, and I asked her once more to help me, once more she said, 'Go home;' but I hadn't the heart or face to do it. And then—what would Father say? I sank so low that I went into service—the drudge of a lodging-house—and when the mistress died, and I appealed to the Sister again, her answer—I think I have it about me—yes, there it is!

*Dora (reads).* 'My dear Child,—I can do no more for you. I have done wrong in keeping your secret; your Father must be now in extreme old age. Go back to him and ask his forgiveness before he dies.—SISTER AGATHA.' Sister Agatha is right. Don't you long for Father's forgiveness!

*Eva.* I would almost die to have it!

*Dora.* And he may die before he gives it; may drop off any day, any hour. You must see him at once. (*Rings bell. Enter MILLY.*) Milly, my dear, how did you leave Mr. Steer?

*Milly.* He's been a-moanin' and a-groanin' in 'is sleep, but I thinks he be wakkenin' oop.

*Dora.* Tell him that I and the lady here wish to see him. You see she is lamed, and cannot go down to him.

*Milly.* Yeas, Miss, I will.

[*Exit MILLY.*]

*Dora.* I ought to prepare you. You must not expect to find our Father as he was five years ago. He is much altered; but I

trust that your return—for you know, my dear, you were always his favourite—will give him, as they say, a new lease of life.

*Eva (clinging to DORA).* Oh, Dora, Dora!

[*Enter STEER led by MILLY.*]

*Steer.* Hes the cow cawwed?

*Dora.* No, Father.

*Steer.* Be the colt dead?

*Dora.* No, Father.

*Steer.* He wur sa bellows'd out wi' the wind this murnin', 'at I tell'd 'em to gallop 'im. Be he dead?

*Dora.* Not that I know.

*Steer.* What hasta sent fur me, then, fur?

*Dora (taking STEER'S arm).* Well, Father, I have a surprise for you.

*Steer.* I ha niver been surprised but once i' my life, and I went blind upon it.

*Dora.* Eva has come home.

*Steer.* Hoam? fro' the bottom o' the river?

*Dora.* No, Father, that was a mistake. She's here again.

*Steer.* The Steers was all gentlefoalks i' the owd times, an' I worked early an' laate to maake 'em all gentlefoalks agean. 'The land belonged to the Steers i' the owd times, an' it belongs to the Steers agean: I bowt it back agean; but I couldn't buy my darter back agean when she lost hersen, could I? I eddicated boath on 'em to marry gentlemen, an' one on 'em went an' lost hersen i' the river.

*Dora.* No, Father, she's here.

*Steer.* Here! she moant coom here. What would her mother saay? If it be her ghoast, we mun abide it. We can't keep a ghoast out.

*Eva (falling at his feet).* O forgive me! forgive me!

*Steer.* Who said that? Taake me awaay, little gell. It be one o' my bad daays.

[*Exit STEER led by MILLY.*]

*Dora (smoothing EVA'S forehead).* Be not so cast down, my sweet Eva. You heard him say it was one of his bad days. He will be sure to know you to-morrow.

*Eva.* It is almost the last of my bad days, I think. I am very faint. I must lie down. Give me your arm. Lead me back again.

[*DORA takes EVA into inner room.*]

*Enter MILLY*

*Milly.* Miss Dora! Miss Dora!

*Dora* (returning and leaving the bedroom door ajar). Quiet! quiet! What is it?

*Milly.* Mr. 'Arold, Miss.

*Dora.* Below?

*Milly.* Yeās, Miss. He be saayin' a word to the owd man, but he'll coom up if ye lets 'im.

*Dora.* Tell him, then, that I'm waiting for him.

*Milly.* Yeās, Miss.

[*Exit. DORA sits pensively and waits.*]

*Enter HAROLD*

*Harold.* You are pale, my Dora! but the ruddiest cheek

That ever charm'd the plowman of your wolds

Might wish its rose a lily, could it look

But half as lovely. I was speaking with

Your father, asking his consent—you wish'd me—

That we should marry: he would answer nothing,

I could make nothing of him; but, my flower,

You look so weary and so worn! What is it Has put you out of heart?

*Dora.* It puts me in heart Again to see you; but indeed the state Of my poor father puts me out of heart. Is yours yet living?

*Harold.* No—I told you.

*Dora.* When?

*Harold.* Confusion!—Ah well, well! the state we all

Must come to in our spring-and-winter world

If we live long enough! and poor Steer looks

The very type of Age in a picture, bow'd To the earth he came from, to the grave he goes to,

Beneath the burthen of years.

*Dora.* More like the picture Of Christian in my 'Pilgrim's Progress' here,

Bow'd to the dust beneath the burthen of sin.

*Harold.* Sin! What sin?

*Dora.* Not his own.

*Harold.* That nursery-tale Still read, then?

*Dora.* Yes; our carters and our shepherds

Still find a comfort there.

*Harold.* Carters and shepherds!

*Dora.* Scorn! I hate scorn. A soul with no religion—

My mother used to say that such a one Was without rudder, anchor, compass—might be

Blown everyway with every gust and wreck On any rock; and tho' you are good and gentle,

Yet if thro' any want—

*Harold.* Of this religion?

Child, read a little history, you will find The common brotherhood of man has been

Wrong'd by the cruelties of his religions More than could ever have happen'd thro' the want

Of any or all of them.

*Dora.* —But, O dear friend, If thro' the want of any—I mean the true one—

And pardon me for saying it—you should ever

Be tempted into doing what might seem Not altogether worthy of you, I think That I should break my heart, for you have taught me

To love you.

*Harold.* What is this? some one been stirring

Against me? he, your rustic amourist, The polish'd Damon of your pastoral here, This Dobson of your idyll?

*Dora.* No, Sir, no! Did you not tell me he was crazed with jealousy,

Had threaten'd ev'n your life, and would say anything?

Did I not promise not to listen to him, Nor ev'n to see the man?

*Harold.* Good; then what is it That makes you talk so dolefully?

*Dora.* I told you— My father. Well, indeed, a friend just now,

One that has been much wrong'd, whose  
griefs are mine,  
Was warning me that if a gentleman  
Should wed a farmer's daughter, he would  
be  
Sooner or later shamed of her among  
The ladies, born his equals.

*Harold.* More fool he!  
What I that have been call'd a Socialist,  
A Communist, a Nihilist—what you  
will!—

*Dora.* What are all these?

*Harold.* Utopian idiotcies.  
They did not last three Junes. Such ram-  
pant weeds  
Strangle each other, die, and make the soil  
For Cæsars, Cromwells, and Napoleons  
To root their power in. I have freed myself  
From all such dreams, and some will say  
because

I have inherited my Uncle. Let them.  
But—shamed of you, my Empress! I  
should prize

The pearl of Beauty, even if I found it  
Dark with the soot of slums.

*Dora.* But I can tell you,  
We Steers are of old blood, tho' we be  
fallen.

See there our shield. (*Pointing to arms on  
mantelpiece.*)

For I have heard the Steers  
Had land in Saxon times; and your own  
name

Of Harold sounds so English and so old  
I am sure you must be proud of it.

*Harold.* Not I!  
As yet I scarcely feel it mine. I took it  
For some three thousand acres. I have  
land now

And wealth, and lay both at your feet.

*Dora.* And *what* was  
Your name before?

*Harold.* Come, come, my girl, enough  
Of this strange talk. I love you and you me.  
True, I have held opinions, hold some still,  
Which you would scarce approve of: for  
all that,

I am a man not prone to jealousies,  
Caprices, humours, moods; but very ready  
To make allowances, and mighty slow  
To feel offences. Nay, I do believe

I could forgive—well, almost anything—  
And that more freely than your formal  
priest,

Because I know more fully than *he* can  
What poor earthworms are all and each  
of us,

Here crawling in this boundless Nature.

*Dora.*  
If marriage ever brought a woman happi-  
ness

I doubt not I can make you happy.

*Dora.* You make me  
Happy already.

*Harold.* And I never said  
As much before to any woman living.

*Dora.* No?

*Harold.* No! by this true kiss, *you* are  
the first

I ever have loved truly.

[*They kiss each other.*  
*Eva* (*with a wild cry*). Philip Edgar!

*Harold.* The phantom cry! *You*—did  
*you* hear a cry?

*Dora.* She must be crying out 'Edgar' in  
her sleep.

*Harold.* Who must be crying out 'Edgar'  
in her sleep?

*Dora.* Your pardon for a minute. She  
must be waked.

*Harold.* Who must be waked?

*Dora.* I am not deaf: you fright me.

What ails you?

*Harold.* Speak.

*Dora.* You know her, *Eva*.

*Harold.* *Eva*!  
[*Eva opens the door and stands in the  
entry.*

She!

*Eva.* Make her happy, then, and I for-  
give you. [*Falls dead.*

*Dora.* Happy! What? Edgar? Is it so?  
Can it be?

They told me so. Yes, yes! I see it all now.  
O she has fainted. Sister, *Eva*, sister!  
He is yours again—he will love *you* again;  
I give him back to you again. Look up!  
One word, or do but smile! Sweet, do you  
hear me?

[*Puts her hand on EVA's heart.*  
There, there—the heart, O God!—the  
poor young heart



Broken at last—all still—and nothing left  
To live for. [*Falls on body of her sister.*]

*Harold.* Living . . . dead . . . She said  
'all still.  
Nothing to live for.'

She—she knows me—now . . .

(*A pause.*)

She knew me from the first, she juggled  
with me,  
She hid this sister, told me she was dead—  
I have wasted pity on her—not dead now—  
No! acting, playing on me, both of them.  
*They* drag the river for her! no, not they!  
Playing on me—not dead now—a swoon—  
a scene—  
Yet—how she made her wail as for the  
dead!

*Enter MILLY*

*Milly.* Pleäse, Mister 'Arold.

*Harold (roughly).* Well?

*Milly.* The owd man's coom'd agcain to  
'issen, an' wants

To hev a word wi' ye about the marriage.

*Harold.* The what?

*Milly.* The marriage.

*Harold.* The marriage?

*Milly.* Ycäs, the marriage.

Granny says marriages be maade 'i 'eaven.

*Harold.* She lies! They are made in Hell.

Child, can't you see?

Tell them to fly for a doctor.

*Milly.* O law—ycäs, Sir!

I'll run fur 'im mysen. [*Exit.*]

*Harold.* All silent there,  
Yes, deathlike! Dead? I dare not look: if  
dead,

Were it best to steal away, to spare myself,  
And her too, pain, pain, pain?

My curse on all  
This world of mud, on all its idiot gleams  
Of pleasure, all the foul fatalities  
That blast our natural passions into pains!

*Enter DOBSON*

*Dobson.* You, Master Hedgar, Harold, or  
whativer

They calls ye, for I warrants that ye goäts  
By haäfe a scoor o' naames—out o' the  
chamber.

[*Dragging him past the body.*]

*Harold.* Not that way, man! Curse on  
your brutal strength!

I cannot pass that way.

*Dobson.* Out o' the chaumber!

I'll mash tha into nowt.

*Harold.* The mere wild-beast!

*Dobson.* Out o' the chaumber, dang tha!

*Harold.* Lout, churl, clown!

[*While they are shouting and struggling DORA rises and comes between them.*]

*Dora (to DOBSON).* Peace, let him be: it  
is the chamber of Death!

Sir, you are tenfold more a gentleman,  
A hundred times more worth a woman's  
love,

Than this, this—but I waste no words  
upon him:

His wickedness is like my wretchedness—  
Beyond all language.

(*To HAROLD.*)

You—you see her there!

Only fifteen when first you came on her,  
And then the sweetest flower of all the  
wolds,

So lovely in the promise of her May,  
So winsome in her grace and gaiety,  
So loved by all the village people here,  
So happy in herself and in her home—

*Dobson (agitated).* Theer, theer! ha'  
done. I can't abear to see her. [*Exit.*]

*Dora.* A child, and all as trustful as a  
child!

Five years of shame and suffering broke  
the heart

That only beat for you; and he, the father,  
Thro' that dishonour which you brought  
upon us,

Has lost his health, his eyesight, even his  
mind.

*Harold (covering his face).* Enough!

*Dora.* It seem'd so; only there was left  
A second daughter, and to her you came  
Veiling one sin to act another.

*Harold.* No!

You wrong me there! hear, hear me! I  
wish'd, if you— [*Pauses.*]

*Dora.* If I—

*Harold.* Could love me, could be  
brought to love me

As I loved you—

<i>Dora.</i>	What then?	That ever made earth tremble—he, nor I—
<i>Harold.</i>	I wish'd, I hoped	The shelter of <i>your</i> roof—not for one
To make, to make—		moment—
<i>Dora.</i> What did you hope to make?		Nothing from <i>you</i> !
<i>Harold.</i> 'Twere best to make an end of		Sunk in the deepest pit of pauperism,
my lost life.		Push'd from all doors as if we bore the
O Dora, Dora!		plague,
<i>Dora.</i> What did you hope to make?		Smitten with fever in the open field,
<i>Harold.</i> Make, make! I cannot find the		Laid famine-stricken at the gates of
word—forgive it—		Death—
Amends.		Nothing from you!
<i>Dora.</i>	For what? to whom?	But she there—her last word
<i>Harold.</i>	To him, to you!	Forgave—and I forgive you. If you
	[ <i>Falling at her feet.</i> ]	ever
<i>Dora.</i> To <i>him</i> ! to <i>me</i> !		Forgive yourself, you are even lower and
No, not with all your wealth,		baser
Your land, your life! Out in the fiercest		Than even I can well believe you. Go!
storm		[ <i>He lies at her feet. Curtain falls.</i> ]

# THE FORESTERS

## ROBIN HOOD AND MAID MARIAN

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ROBIN HOOD, *Earl of Huntingdon.*

KING RICHARD, *Cœur de Lion.*

PRINCE JOHN.

LITTLE JOHN,

WILL SCARLET,

FRIAR TUCK,

MUCH,

A JUSTICIARY.

SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM.

ABBOT OF ST. MARY'S.

SIR RICHARD LEA.

WALTER LEA, *son of Sir Richard Lea.*

MAID MARIAN, *daughter of Sir Richard Lea.*

KATE, *attendant on Marian.*

OLD WOMAN.

*Followers of Robin Hood.*

*Retainers, Messengers, Merry Men, Mercenaries, Friars, Beggars, Sailors,  
Peasants (men and women), etc.*

### ACT I

#### SCENE I. THE BOND

#### SCENES II, III. THE OUTLAWRY

#### SCENE I

#### *The Garden before Sir Richard Lea's Castle*

*Kate (gathering flowers).* These roses for my Lady Marian; these lilies to lighten Sir Richard's black room, where he sits and eats his heart for want of money to pay the Abbot.

*[Sings.*

The warrior Earl of Allendale,  
He loved the Lady Anne;  
The lady loved the master well,  
The maid she loved the man.

All in the castle garden,  
Or ever the day began,  
The lady gave a rose to the Earl,  
The maid a rose to the man.

'I go to fight in Scotland  
With many a savage clan,'  
The lady gave her hand to the Earl,  
The maid her hand to the man.

'Farewell, farewell, my warrior Earl!  
And ever a tear down ran.  
She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,  
And the maid a kiss to the man.

#### *Enter four ragged RETAINERS*

*First Retainer.* You do well, Mistress Kate, to sing and to gather roses. You be fed with tit-bits, you, and we be dogs that have only the bones, till we be only bones our own selves.

*Kate.* I am fed with tit-bits no more than you are, but I keep a good heart and make the most of it, and, truth to say, Sir Richard and my Lady Marian fare wellnigh as sparely as their people.

*Second Retainer.* And look at our suits, out at knee, out at elbow. We be more like scarecrows in a field than decent serving men; and then, I pray you, look at Robin Earl of Huntingdon's men.

*First Retainer.* She hath looked well at one of 'em, Little John.

*Third Retainer.* Ay, how fine they be in their liveries, and each of 'em as full of meat as an egg, and as sleek and as round-about as a mellow codlin.

*Fourth Retainer.* But I be worse off than any of you, for I be lean by nature, and if you cram me crop-full I be little better than Famine in the picture, but if you starve me I be Gaffer Death himself. I would like to show you, Mistress Kate,

how bare and spare I be on the rib: I be lanker than an old horse turned out to die on the common.

*Kate.* Spare me thy spare ribs, I pray thee; but now I ask you all, did none of you love young Walter Lea?

*First Retainer.* Ay, if he had not gone to fight the king's battles, we should have better battels at home.

*Kate.* Right as an Oxford scholar, but the boy was taken prisoner by the Moors.

*First Retainer.* Ay.

*Kate.* And Sir Richard was told he might be ransomed for two thousand marks in gold.

*First Retainer.* Ay.

*Kate.* Then he borrowed the monies from the Abbot of York, the Sheriff's brother. And if they be not paid back at the end of the year, the land goes to the Abbot.

*First Retainer.* No news of young Walter?

*Kate.* None, nor of the gold, nor the man who took out the gold: but now ye know why we live so stintedly, and why ye have so few grains to peck at. Sir Richard must scrape and scrape till he get to the land again. Come, come, why do ye loiter here? Carry fresh rushes into the dining-hall, for those that are there, they be so greasy, and smell so vilely that my Lady Marian holds her nose when she steps across it.

*Fourth Retainer.* Why there, now! that very word 'greasy' hath a kind of unction in it, a smack of relish about it. The rats have gnawed 'em already. I pray Heaven we may not have to take to the rushes.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Kate.* Poor fellows!

The lady gave her hand to the Earl,  
The maid her hand to the man.

*Enter LITTLE JOHN*

*Little John.* My master, Robin the Earl, is always a-telling us that every man, for the sake of the great blessed Mother in heaven, and for the love of his own little mother on earth, should handle all woman-kind gently, and hold them in all honour,

and speak small to 'em, and not scare 'em, but go about to come at their love with all manner of homages, and observances, and circumbendibuses.

*Kate.* The lady gave a rose to the Earl,  
'The maid a rose to the man.

*Little John (seeing her).* O the sacred little thing! What a shape! what lovely arms! A rose to the man! Ay, the man had given her a rose and she gave him another.

*Kate.* Shall I keep one little rose for Little John? No.

*Little John.* There, there! You see I was right. She hath a tenderness toward me, but is too shy to show it. It is in her, in the woman, and the man must bring it out of her.

*Kate.* She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,  
'The maid a kiss to the man.

*Little John.* Did she? But there I am sure the ballad is at fault. It should have told us how the man first kissed the maid. She doesn't see me. Shall I be bold? shall I touch her? shall I give her the first kiss? O sweet Kate, my first love, the first kiss, the first kiss!

*Kate (turns and kisses him).* Why lookest thou so amazed?

*Little John.* I cannot tell; but I came to give thee the first kiss, and thou hast given it me.

*Kate.* But if a man and a maid care for one another, does it matter so much if the maid give the first kiss?

*Little John.* I cannot tell, but I had sooner have given thee the first kiss. I was dreaming of it all the way hither.

*Kate.* Dream of it, then, all the way back, for now I will have none of it.

*Little John.* Nay, now thou hast given me the man's kiss, let me give thee the maid's.

*Kate.* If thou draw one inch nearer, I will give thee a buffet on the face.

*Little John.* Wilt thou not give me rather the little rose for Little John?

*Kate (throws it down and tramples on it).* There!

[*KATE, seeing MARIAN, exit hurriedly.*]

*Enter MARIAN (singing)*

Love flew in at the window

As Wealth walk'd in at the door.

'You have come for you saw Wealth coming,'  
said I.

But he flutter'd his wings with a sweet little cry,  
I'll cleave to you rich or poor.

Wealth dropt out of the window,

Poverty crept thro' the door.

'Well now you would fain follow Wealth,'  
said I,

But he flutter'd his wings as he gave me the lie,  
I cling to you all the more.

*Little John.* Thanks, my lady—inasmuch as I am a true believer in true love myself, and your Ladyship hath sung the old proverb out of fashion.

*Marian.* Ay but thou hast ruffled my woman, Little John. She hath the fire in her face and the dew in her eyes. I believed thee to be too solemn and formal to be a ruffler. Out upon thee!

*Little John.* I am no ruffler, my lady; but I pray you, my lady, if a man and a maid love one another, may the maid give the first kiss?

*Marian.* It will be all the more gracious of her if she do.

*Little John.* I cannot tell. Manners be so corrupt, and these are the days of Prince John. *[Exit.]*

*Enter SIR RICHARD LEA (reading a bond)*

*Sir Richard.* Marian!

*Marian.* Father!

*Sir Richard.* Who parted from thee even now?

*Marian.* That strange starched stiff creature, Little John, the Earl's man. He would grapple with a lion like the King, and is flustered by a girl's kiss.

*Sir Richard.* There never was an Earl so true a friend of the people as Lord Robin of Huntingdon.

*Marian.* A gallant Earl. I love him as I hate John.

*Sir Richard.* I fear me he hath wasted his revenues in the service of our good king Richard against the party of John, as I have done, as I have done: and where is Richard?

*Marian.* Cleave to him, father! he will come home at last.

*Sir Richard.* I trust he will, but if he do not I and thou are but beggars.

*Marian.* We will be beggar'd then and be true to the King.

*Sir Richard.* Thou speakest like a fool or a woman. Canst thou endure to be a beggar whose whole life hath been folded like a blossom in the sheath, like a careless sleeper in the down; who never hast felt a want, to whom all things, up to this present, have come as freely as heaven's air and mother's milk?

*Marian.* Tut, father! I am none of your delicate Norman maidens who can only broider and mayhap ride a-hawking with the help of the men. I can bake and I can brew, and by all the saints I can shoot almost as closely with the bow as the great Earl himself. I have played at the foils too with Kate: but is not to-day his birthday?

*Sir Richard.* Dost thou love him indeed, that thou keepest a record of his birthdays? Thou knowest that the Sheriff of Nottingham loves thee.

*Marian.* The Sheriff dare to love me? me who worship Robin the great Earl of Huntingdon? I love him as a damsel of his day might have loved Harold the Saxon or Hereward the Wake. They both fought against the tyranny of the kings, the Normans. But then your Sheriff, your little man, if he dare to fight at all, would fight for his rents, his leases, his houses, his monies, his oxen, his dinners, himself. Now your great man, your Robin, all England's Robin, fights not for himself but for the people of England. This John—this Norman tyranny—the stream is bearing us all down, and our little Sheriff will ever swim with the stream! but our great man, our Robin, against it. And how often in old histories have the great men striven against the stream, and how often in the long sweep of years to come must the great man strive against it again to save his country, and the liberties of his people! God bless our well-beloved Robin, Earl of Huntingdon.

*Sir Richard.* Ay, ay. He wore thy colours once at a tourney. I am old and forget. Was Prince John there?

*Marian.* The Sheriff of Nottingham was there—not John.

*Sir Richard.* Beware of John and the Sheriff of Nottingham. They hunt in couples, and when they look at a maid they blast her.

*Marian.* Then the maid is not high-hearted enough.

*Sir Richard.* There—there—be not a fool again. Their aim is ever at that which flies highest—but O girl, girl, I am almost in despair. Those two thousand marks lent me by the Abbot for the ransom of my son Walter—I believed this Abbot of the party of King Richard, and he hath sold himself to that beast John—they must be paid in a year and a month, or I lose the land. There is one that should be grateful to me overseas, a Count in Brittany—he lives near Quimper. I saved his life once in battle. He has monies. I will go to him. I saved him. I will try him. I am all but sure of him. I will go to him.

*Marian.* And I will follow thee, and God help us both.

*Sir Richard.* Child, thou shouldst marry one who will pay the mortgage. This Robin, this Earl of Huntingdon—he is a friend of Richard—I know not, but he may save the land, he may save the land.

*Marian* (*showing a cross hung round her neck*). Father, you see this cross?

*Sir Richard.* Ay the King, thy godfather, gave it thee when a baby.

*Marian.* And he said that whenever I married he would give me away, and on this cross I have sworn [*kisses it*] that till I myself pass away, there is no other man that shall give me away.

*Sir Richard.* Lo there—thou art fool again—I am all as loyal as thyself, but what a vow! what a vow!

*Re-enter LITTLE JOHN*

*Little John.* My Lady Marian, your woman so flustered me that I forgot my message from the Earl. To-day he hath accomplished his thirtieth birthday, and he prays your ladyship and your ladyship's father to be present at his banquet to-night.

*Marian.* Say, we will come.

*Little John.* And I pray you, my lady, to stand between me and your woman, Kate.

*Marian.* I will speak with her.

*Little John.* I thank you, my lady, and I wish you and your ladyship's father a most exceedingly good morning. [*Exit.*]

*Sir Richard.* Thou hast answered for me, but I know not if I will let thee go.

*Marian.* I mean to go.

*Sir Richard.* Not if I barred thee up in thy chamber, like a bird in a cage.

*Marian.* Then I would drop from the casement, like a spider.

*Sir Richard.* But I would hoist the draw-bridge, like thy master.

*Marian.* And I would swim the moat, like an otter.

*Sir Richard.* But I would set my men-at-arms to oppose thee, like the Lord of the Castle.

*Marian.* And I would break through them all, like the King of England.

*Sir Richard.* Well, thou shalt go, but O the land! the land! my great great great grandfather, my great great grandfather, my great grandfather, my grandfather and my own father—they were born and bred on it—it was their mother—they have trodden it for half a thousand years, and whenever I set my own foot on it I say to it, Thou art mine, and it answers, I am thine to the very heart of the earth—but now I have lost my gold, I have lost my son, and I shall lose my land also. Down to the devil with this bond that beggars me!

[*Flings down the bond.*]

*Marian.* Take it again, dear father, be not wroth at the dumb parchment. Sufficient for the day, dear father! let us be merry to-night at the banquet.

## SCENE II

*A hall in the house of Robin Hood the Earl of Huntingdon. Doors open into a banquetting-hall where he is at feast with his Friends*

## DRINKING SONG

Long live Richard,  
Robin and Richard!  
Long live Richard!  
Down with John!

22

Drink to the Lion-heart  
Every one!  
Pledge the Plantagenet,  
Him that is gone.  
Who knows whither?  
God's good Angel  
Help him back hither,  
And down with John!  
Long live Robin,  
Robin and Richard!  
Long live Robin,  
And down with John!

*Enter PRINCE JOHN disguised as a monk and the SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM. Cries of 'Down with John,' 'Long live King Richard,' 'Down with John.'*

*Prince John.* Down with John! ha. Shall I be known? is my disguise perfect?

*Sheriff.* Perfect—who should know you for Prince John, so that you keep the cowl down and speak not?

*[Shouts from the banquet-room.]*

*Prince John.* Thou and I will still these revelries presently.

*[Shouts, 'Long live King Richard!']*  
I come here to see this daughter of Sir Richard of the Lea and if her beauties answer their report. If so—

*Sheriff.* If so—

*[Shouts, 'Down with John!']*

*Prince John.* You hear!

*Sheriff.* Yes, my lord, fear not. I will answer for you.

*Enter LITTLE JOHN, SCARLET, MUCH, etc., from the banquet singing a snatch of the Drinking Song.*

*Little John.* I am a silent man myself, and all the more wonder at our Earl. What a wealth of words—O Lord, I will live and die for King Richard—not so much for the cause as for the Earl. O Lord, I am easily led by words, but I think the Earl hath right. Scarlet, hath not the Earl right? What makes thee so down in the mouth?

*Scarlet.* I doubt not, I doubt not, and though I be down in the mouth, I will swear by the head of the Earl.

*Little John.* Thou Much, miller's son, hath not the Earl right?

*Much.* More water goes by the mill than the miller wots of, and more goes to make

right than I know of, but for all that I will swear the Earl hath right. But they are coming hither for the dance—

*Enter FRIAR TUCK*

be they not, Friar Tuck? Thou art the Earl's confessor and shouldst know.

*Tuck.* Ay, ay, and but that I am a man of weight, and the weight of the church to boot on my shoulders, I would dance too. Fa, la, la, fa, la, la. *[Capering.]*

*Much.* But doth not the weight of the flesh at odd times overbalance the weight of the church, ha friar?

*Tuck.* Homo sum. I love my dinner—but I can fast, I can fast; and as to other frailties of the flesh—out upon thee! Homo sum, sed virgo sum, I am a virgin, my masters, I am a virgin.

*Much.* And a virgin, my masters, three yards about the waist is like to remain a virgin, for who could embrace such an armful of joy?

*Tuck.* Knave, there is a lot of wild fellows in Sherwood Forest who hold by King Richard. If ever I meet thee there, I will break thy sconce with my quarter-staff.

*Enter from the banqueting-hall SIR RICHARD LEA, ROBIN HOOD, etc.*

*Robin.* My guests and friends, Sir Richard, all of you

Who deign to honour this my thirtieth year,

And some of you were prophets that I might be

Now that the sun our King is gone, the light

Of these dark hours; but this new moon, I fear,

Is darkness. Nay, this may be the last time When I shall hold my birthday in this hall: I may be outlaw'd, I have heard a rumour.

*All.* God forbid!

*Robin.* Nay, but we have no news of Richard yet,

And ye did wrong in crying 'Down with John;'

For he be dead, then John may be our King.

*All.* God forbid!

*Robin.* Ay God forbid,  
But if it be so we must bear with John.  
The man is able enough—no lack of wit,  
And apt at arms and shrewd in policy.  
Courteous enough too when he wills; and yet

I hate him for his want of chivalry.  
He that can pluck the flower of maiden-  
hood

From off the stalk and trample it in the  
mire,  
And boast that he hath trampled it. I hate  
him,

I hate the man. I may not hate the King  
For aught I know,  
So that our Barons bring his baseness under.  
I think they will be mightier than the king.

[*Dance music.*]

(*MARIAN enters with other damsels*)

*Robin.* The high Heaven guard thee from  
his wantonness,  
Who art the fairest flower of maidenhood  
That ever blossom'd on this English isle.

*Marian.* Cloud not thy birthday with  
one fear for me.

My lord, myself and my good father pray  
Thy thirtieth summer may be thirty-fold  
As happy as any of those that went before.

*Robin.* My Lady Marian you can make  
it so

If you will deign to tread a measure with  
me.

*Marian.* Full willingly, my lord.

[*They dance.*]

*Robin (after dance).* My Lady, will you  
answer me a question?

*Marian.* Any that you may ask.

*Robin.* A question that every true man  
asks of a woman once in his life.

*Marian.* I will not answer it, my lord,  
till King Richard come home again.

*Prince John (to SHERIFF).* How she looks  
up at him, how she holds her face!  
Now if she kiss him, I will have his head.

*Sheriff.* Peace, my lord; the Earl and  
Sir Richard come this way.

*Robin.* Must you have these monies  
before the year and the month end?

*Sir Richard.* Or I forfeit my land to the

Abbot. I must pass overseas to one that I  
trust will help me.

*Robin.* Leaving your fair Marian alone  
here.

*Sir Richard.* Ay, for she hath somewhat  
of the lioness in her, and there be men-at-  
arms to guard her.

[*ROBIN, SIR RICHARD, and MARIAN  
pass on.*]

*Prince John (to SHERIFF).* Why that will  
be our opportunity

When I and thou will rob the nest of her.  
*Sheriff.* Good Prince, art thou in need  
of any gold?

*Prince John.* Gold? why? not now.

*Sheriff.* I would give thee any gold  
So that myself alone might rob the nest.

*Prince John.* Well, well then, thou shalt  
rob the nest alone.

*Sheriff.* Swear to me by that relic on thy  
neck.

*Prince John.* I swear then by this relic on  
my neck—

No, no, I will not swear by this; I keep it  
For holy vows made to the blessed Saints  
Not pleasures, women's matters.

Dost thou mistrust me? Am I not thy  
friend?

Beware, man, lest thou lose thy faith in me.  
I love thee much; and as I *am* thy friend,  
I promise thee to make this Marian thine.  
Go now and ask the maid to dance with  
thee,

And learn from her if she do love this Earl.

*Sheriff (advancing toward MARIAN and  
ROBIN).* Pretty mistress!

*Robin.* What art thou, man? Sheriff of  
Nottingham?

*Sheriff.* Ay, my lord. I and my friend,  
this monk, were here belated, and seeing  
the hospitable lights in your castle, and  
knowing the fame of your hospitality, we  
ventured in uninvited.

*Robin.* You are welcome, though I fear  
you be of those who hold more by John  
than Richard.

*Sheriff.* True, for through John I had  
my sheriffship. I am John's till Richard  
come back again, and then I am Richard's.  
Pretty mistress, will you dance?

[*They dance.*]



# THE FORESTERS

ACT I

*Robin (talking to PRINCE JOHN).* What monk of what convent art thou? Why wearest thou thy cowl to hide thy face?

[PRINCE JOHN *shakes his head.*  
Is he deaf, or dumb, or daft, or drunk belike?

[PRINCE JOHN *shakes his head.*  
Why comest thou like a death's head at my feast?

[PRINCE JOHN *points to the SHERIFF, who is dancing with MARIAN.*  
Is he thy mouthpiece, thine interpreter?

[PRINCE JOHN *nods.*  
*Sheriff (to MARIAN as they pass).* Beware of John!

*Marian.* I hate him.  
*Sheriff.* Would you cast An eye of favour on me, I would pay My brother all his debt and save the land.

*Marian.* I cannot answer thee till Richard come.

*Sheriff.* And when he comes?

*Marian.* Well, you must wait till then.

*Little John (dancing with KATE).* Is it made up? Will you kiss me?

*Kate.* You shall give me the first kiss.

*Little John.* There (*kisses her*). Now then.

*Kate.* You shall wait for mine till Sir Richard has paid the Abbot.

[*They pass on.*  
[*The SHERIFF leaves MARIAN with her father and comes towards ROBIN.*

*Robin (to SHERIFF, PRINCE JOHN standing by).* Sheriff, thy friend, this monk, is but a statue.

*Sheriff.* Pardon him, my lord: he is a holy Palmer, bounden by a vow not to show his face, nor to speak word to anyone, till he join King Richard in the Holy Land.

*Robin.* Going to the Holy Land to Richard! Give me thy hand and tell him— Why, what a cold grasp is thine—as if thou didst repent thy courtesy even in the doing it. That is no true man's hand. I hate hidden faces.

*Sheriff.* Pardon him again, I pray you; but the twilight of the coming day already glimmers in the east. We thank you, and farewell.

*Robin.* Farewell, farewell. I hate hidden faces.

[*Exeunt PRINCE JOHN and SHERIFF.*  
*Sir Richard (coming forward with MAID MARIAN).* How close the Sheriff peer'd into thine eyes!

What did he say to thee?

*Marian.* Bade me beware Of John: what maid but would beware of John?

*Sir Richard.* What else?

*Marian.* I care not what he said.

*Sir Richard.* What else?

*Marian.* That if I cast an eye of favour on him, Himself would pay this mortgage to his brother, And save the land.

*Sir Richard.* Did he say so, the Sheriff?

*Robin.* I fear this Abbot is a heart of flint, Hard as the stones of his abbey.

O good Sir Richard, I am sorry my exchequer runs so low I cannot help you in this exigency; For though my men and I flash out at times

Of festival like burnish'd summer-flies, We make but one hour's buzz, are only like The rainbow of a momentary sun. I am mortgaged as thyself.

*Sir Richard.* Ay! I warrant thee—thou canst not be sorrier than I am. Come away, daughter.

*Robin.* Farewell, Sir Richard; farewell, sweet Marian.

*Marian.* Till better times.

*Robin.* But if the better times should never come?

*Marian.* Then I shall be no worse.

*Robin.* And if the worst time come?

*Marian.* Why then I will be better than the time.

*Robin.* This ring my mother gave me: it was her own Betrothal ring. She pray'd me when I loved A maid with all my heart to pass it down A finger of that hand which should be mine Thereafter. Will you have it? Will you wear it?

*Marian.* Ay, noble Earl, and never part with it.

## SCENE II

## THE FORESTERS

*Sir Richard Lea (coming up).* Not till she  
clean forget thee, noble Earl.

*Marian.* Forget *him*—never—by this  
Holy Cross

Which good King Richard gave me when  
a child—

Never!

Not while the swallow skims along the  
ground,

And while the lark flies up and touches  
heaven!

Not while the smoke floats from the cottage  
roof,

And the white cloud is roll'd along the sky!

Not while the rivulet babbles by the door,  
And the great breaker beats upon the  
beach!

Never—

Till Nature, high and low, and great and  
small

Forgets herself, and all her loves and hates  
Sink again into chaos.

*Sir Richard Lea.* Away! away!

[*Exeunt to music.*]

## SCENE III

*Same as Scene II*

ROBIN and his men

*Robin.* All gone!—my ring—I am happy  
—should be happy.

She took my ring. I trust she loves me—  
yet

I heard this Sheriff tell her he would pay  
The mortgage if she favour'd him. I fear  
Not her, the father's power upon her.

Friends, (*to his men*)

I am only merry for an hour or two  
Upon a birthday: if this life of ours  
Be a good glad thing, why should we make  
us merry

Because a year of it is gone? but Hope  
Smiles from the threshold of the year to  
come

Whispering 'it will be happier,' and old  
faces

Press round us, and warm hands close with  
warm hands,

And thro' the blood the wine leaps to the  
brain

Like April sap to the topmost tree, that  
shoots

New buds to heaven, whereon the throstle  
rock'd

Sings a new song to the new year—and  
you

Strike up a song, my friends, and then to  
bed.

*Little John.* What will you have, my  
lord?

*Robin.*

'To sleep! to sleep!'

*Little John.* There is a touch of sadness  
in it, my lord,

But ill befitting such a festal day

*Robin.* I have a touch of sadness in  
myself.

Sing.

## SONG

'To sleep! to sleep! The long bright day is done,  
And darkness rises from the fallen sun.

'To sleep! to sleep!

Whate'er thy joys, they vanish with the day;

Whate'er thy griefs, in sleep they fade away.

'To sleep! to sleep!

Sleep, mournful heart, and let the past be past!

Sleep, happy soul! all life will sleep at last.

'To sleep! to sleep!

[*A trumpet blown at the gates.*]

*Robin.* Who breaks the stillness of the  
morning thus?

*Little John (going out and returning).*

It is a royal messenger, my lord:

I trust he brings news of the King's  
coming.

*Enter a PURSUIVANT who reads*

O yes, O yes, O yes! In the name of the  
Regent. Thou, Robin Hood Earl of  
Huntingdon, art attained and hast lost  
thine earldom of Huntingdon. Moreover  
thou art dispossessed of all thy lands, goods,  
and chattels; and by virtue of this writ,  
whereas Robin Hood Earl of Huntingdon  
by force and arms hath trespassed against  
the king in divers manners, therefore by  
the judgment of the officers of the said  
lord king, according to the law and custom  
of the kingdom of England Robin Hood  
Earl of Huntingdon is outlawed and  
banished.

*Robin.* I have shelter'd some that broke  
the forest laws.

This is irregular and the work of John.  
[*'Irregular, irregular! (tumult)*  
Down with him, tear his coat from  
his back!'

*Messenger.* Ho there! ho there, the  
Sheriff's men without!

*Robin.* Nay, let them be, man, let them  
be. We yield.

How should we cope with John? The  
London folkmote

Has made him all but king, and he hath  
seized

On half the royal castles. Let him alone!  
(*to his men*)

A worthy messenger! how should he  
help it?

Shall *we* too work injustice? what, thou  
shakest!

Here, here—a cup of wine—drink and  
begone! [*Exit MESSENGER.*]

We will away in four-and-twenty hours,  
But shall we leave our England?

*Tuck.* Robin, Earl—

*Robin.* Let be the Earl. Henceforth I am  
no more

Than plain man to plain man.

*Tuck.* Well, then, plain man,

There be good fellows there in merry  
Sherwood

That hold by Richard, tho' they kill his  
deer.

*Robin.* In Sherwood Forest. I have heard  
of them.

Have they no leader?

*Tuck.* Each man for his own.

Be thou their leader and they will all of  
them

Swarm to thy voice like bees to the brass  
pan.

*Robin.* They hold by Richard—the wild  
wood! to cast

All threadbare household habit, mix with  
all

The lusty life of wood and under-  
wood,

Hawk, buzzard, jay, the mavis and the  
merle,

The tawny squirrel vaulting thro' the  
boughs,

The deer, the highback'd polecat, the wild  
boar,

The burrowing badger—By St. Nicholas  
I have a sudden passion for the wild  
wood—

We should be free as air in the wild  
wood—

What say you? shall we go? Your hands,  
your hands! [*Gives his hand to each.*]

You, Scarlet, you are always moody  
here.

*Scarlet.* 'Tis for no lack of love to you,  
my lord,

But lack of happiness in a blatant wife.

She broke my head on Tuesday with a  
dish.

I would have thwack'd the woman, but I  
did not,

Because thou sayest such fine things of  
women,

But I shall have to thwack her if I stay.

*Robin.* Would it be better for thee in the  
wood?

*Scarlet.* Ay, so she did not follow me to  
the wood.

*Robin.* Then, Scarlet, thou at least wilt  
go with me.

Thou, Much, the miller's son, I knew thy  
father:

He was a manly man, as thou art, Much,  
And gray before his time as thou art,  
Much.

*Much.* It is the trick of the family, my  
lord.

There was a song he made to the turning  
wheel—

*Robin.* 'Turn! turn!' but I forget it.

*Much.* I can sing it.

*Robin.* Not now, good Much! And thou,  
dear Little John,

Who hast that worship for me which  
Heaven knows

I ill deserve—you love me, all of you,  
But I am outlaw'd, and if caught, I  
die.

Your hands again. All thanks for all your  
service;

But if you follow me, you may die with  
me.

*All.* We will live and die with thee, we  
will live and die with thee.

## ACT II

## THE FLIGHT OF MARIAN

## SCENE I

*A broad forest glade, woodman's hut at one side with half-door. Foresters are looking to their bows and arrows, or polishing their swords*

FORESTERS sing (as they disperse to their work)

There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no hearts like English hearts  
Such hearts of oak as they be.  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no men like Englishmen  
So tall and bold as they be.

(Full chorus.) And these will strike for England  
And man and maid be free  
To foil and spoil the tyrant  
Beneath the greenwood tree.

There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no wives like English wives  
So fair and chaste as they be.  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be;  
There are no maids like English maids  
So beautiful as they be.

(Full chorus.) And these shall wed with freemen,  
And all their sons be free,  
To sing the songs of England  
Beneath the greenwood tree.

*Robin (alone).* My lonely hour!  
The king of day hath stepped from off his throne,  
Flung by the golden mantle of the cloud,  
And sets, a naked fire. The King of England  
Perchance this day may sink as gloriously,  
Red with his own and enemy's blood—but no!  
We hear he is in prison. It is my birthday.  
I have reign'd one year in the wild wood.  
My mother,  
For whose sake, and the blessed Queen of Heaven,  
I reverence all women, bad me, dying,  
Whene'er this day should come about, to carve  
One lone hour from it, so to meditate

Upon my greater nearness to the birthday  
Of the after-life, when all the sheeted dead  
Are shaken from their stillness in the grave  
By the last trumpet.

Am I worse or better?  
I am outlaw'd. I am none the worse for that.

I held for Richard, and I hated John.

I am a thief, ay, and a king of thieves.

Ay! but we rob the robber, wrong the wronger,

And what we wring from them we give the poor.

I am none the worse for that, and all the better

For this free forest-life, for while I sat  
Among my thralls in my baronial hall  
The groining hid the heavens; but since I breathed,

A houseless head beneath the sun and stars,  
The soul of the woods hath stricken thro' my blood,

The love of freedom, the desire of God,  
The hope of larger life hereafter, more  
Tenfold than under roof.

[Horn blown.]

True, were I taken

They would prick out my sight. A price is set

On this poor head; but I believe there lives  
No man who truly loves and truly rules  
His following, but can keep his followers true.

I am one with mine. Traitors are rarely bred  
Save under traitor kings. Our vice-king John,

True king of vice—true play on words—our John

By his Norman arrogance and dissolute-ness,

Hath made me king of all the discontent  
Of England up thro' all the forest land  
North to the Tyne: being outlaw'd in a land

Where law lies dead, we make ourselves the law.

Why break you thus upon my lonely hour?

*Enter LITTLE JOHN and KATE*

*Little John.* I found this white doe  
wandering thro' the wood,

Not thine, but mine. I have shot her thro' the heart.

*Kate.* He lies, my lord. I have shot *him* thro' the heart.

*Robin.* My God, thou art the very woman who waits

On my dear Marian. Tell me, tell me of her.

Thou comest a very angel out of heaven. Where is she? and how fares she?

*Kate.* O my good lord, I am but an angel by reflected light.

Your heaven is vacant of your angel.

*John*—  
Shame on him!—

Stole on her, she was walking in the garden, And after some slight speech about the Sheriff

He caught her round the waist, whereon she struck him,

And fled into the castle. She and Sir Richard

Have past away, I know not where; and I Was left alone, and knowing as I did

That I had shot him thro' the heart, I came

To eat him up and make an end of him.

*Little John.* In kisses?

*Kate.* You, how dare you mention kisses?

But I am weary pacing thro' the wood. Show me some cave or cabin where I may rest.

*Robin.* Go with him. I will talk with thee anon.

[*Exeunt* LITTLE JOHN and KATE.]

She struck him, my brave Marian, struck the Prince,

The serpent that had crept into the garden And coil'd himself about her sacred waist. I think I should have stricken him to the death.

He never will forgive her.

O the Sheriff

Would pay this cursed mortgage to his brother

If Marian would marry him; and the son Is most like dead—if so the land may come To Marian, and they rate the land five-fold The worth of the mortgage, and who marries her

Marries the land. Most honourable Sheriff! (*Passionately*) Gone, and it may be gone for evermore!

O would that I could see her for a moment Glide like a light across these woodland ways!

Tho' in one moment she should glance away,

I should be happier for it all the year.

O would she moved beside me like my shadow!

O would she stood before me as my queen, To make this Sherwood Eden o'er again, And these rough oaks the palms of Paradise!

Ah! but who be those three yonder with bows?—not of my band—the Sheriff, and by heaven, Prince John himself and one of those mercenaries that suck the blood of England. My people are all scattered I know not where. Have they come for me? Here is the witch's hut. The fool-people call her a witch—a good witch to me! I will shelter here.

[*Knocks at the door of the hut.*]

OLD WOMAN comes out

*Old Woman* (*kisses his hand*). Ah dear Robin! ah noble captain, friend of the poor!

*Robin.* I am chased by my foes. I have forgotten my horn that calls my men together. Disguise me—thy gown and thy coif.

*Old Woman.* Come in, come in; I would give my life for thee, for when the Sheriff had taken all our goods for the King without paying, our horse and our little cart—

*Robin.* Quick, good mother, quick!

*Old Woman.* Ay, ay, gown, coif, and petticoat, and the old woman's blessing with them to the last fringe. [*They go in.*]

*Enter* PRINCE JOHN, SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM, and MERCENARY

*Prince John.* Did we not hear the two would pass this way?

They must have past. Here is a woodman's hut.

*Mercenary.* Take heed, take heed! in Nottingham they say  
There bides a foul witch somewhere here-about.

*Sheriff.* Not in this hut I take it.

*Prince John.* Why not here?

*Sheriff.* I saw a man go in, my lord.

*Prince John.* Not two?

*Sheriff.* No, my lord, one.

*Prince John.* Make for the cottage then!

*Interior of the hut*

ROBIN disguised as old woman

*Prince John (without).* Knock again! knock again!

*Robin (to OLD WOMAN).* Get thee into the closet there, and make a ghostly wail ever and anon to scare 'em.

*Old Woman.* I will, I will, good Robin.

[*Goes into closet.*]

*Prince John (without).* Open, open, or I will drive the door from the door-post.

*Robin (opens door).* Come in, come in.

*Prince John.* Why did ye keep us at the door so long?

*Robin (curtseying).* I was afeard it was the ghost, your worship.

*Prince John.* Ghost! did one in white pass?

*Robin (curtseying).* No, your worship.

*Prince John.* Did two knights pass?

*Robin (curtseying).* No, your worship.

*Sheriff.* I fear me we have lost our labour, then.

*Prince John.* Except this old hag have been bribed to lie.

*Robin.* We old hags should be bribed to speak truth, for, God help us, we lie by nature.

*Prince John.* There was a man just now that enter'd here?

*Robin.* There is but one old woman in the hut.

[OLD WOMAN yells.

*Robin.* I crave your worship's pardon. There is yet another old woman. She was murdered here a hundred year ago, and whenever a murder is to be done again she yells out i' this way—so they say, your worship.

*Mercenary.* Now, if I hadn't a sprig o' wickentree sewn into my dress, I should run.

*Prince John.* Tut! tut! the scream of some wild woodland thing.

How came we to be parted from our men?

We shouted, and *they* shouted, as I thought,

But shout and echo play'd into each other  
So hollowly we knew not which was which.

*Robin.* The wood is full of echoes, owls, elfs, ouphes, oafs, ghosts o' the mist, wills-o'-the-wisp; only they that be bred in it can find their way a-nights in it.

*Prince John.* I am footsore and famish'd therewithal.

Is there aught there?

[*Pointing to cupboard.*]

*Robin.* Naught for the likes o' you.

*Prince John.* Speak straight out, crook-back.

*Robin.* Sour milk and black bread.

*Prince John.* Well, set them forth. I could eat anything.

[*He sets out a table with black bread.*]

This is mere marble. Old hag, how should thy one tooth drill thro' this?

*Robin.* Nay, by St. Gemini, I ha' two; and since the Sheriff left me naught but an empty belly, they can meet upon anything thro' a millstone. You gentles that live upo' manchet-bread and marchpane, what should you know o' the food o' the poor? Look you here, before you can eat it you must hack it with a hatchet, break it all to pieces, as you break the poor, as you would hack at Robin Hood if you could light upon him (*hacks it and flings two pieces*). There's for you, and there's for you—and the old woman's welcome.

*Prince John.* The old wretch is mad, and her bread is beyond me: and the milk—faugh! Hast thou anything to sweeten this?

*Robin.* Here's a pot o' wild honey from an old oak, saving your sweet reverences.

*Sheriff.* Thou hast a cow then, hast thou?

*Robin.* Ay, for when the Sheriff took my little horse for the King without paying for it—

*Sheriff.* How hadst thou then the means to buy a cow?

*Robin.* Eh, I would ha' given my whole body to the King had he asked for it, like the woman at Acre when the Turk shot her as she was helping to build the mound against the city. I ha' served the King living, says she, and let me serve him dead, says she; let me go to make the mound: bury me in the mound, says the woman.

*Sheriff.* Ay, but the cow?

*Robin.* She was given me.

*Sheriff.* By whom?

*Robin.* By a thief.

*Sheriff.* Who, woman, who?

*Robin (sings).*

He was a forester good;  
He was the cock o' the walk;  
He was the king o' the wood.

Your worship may find another rhyme if you care to drag your brains for such a minnow.

*Sheriff.* That cow was mine. I have lost a cow from my meadow. Robin Hood was it? I thought as much. He will come to the gibbet at last.

[OLD WOMAN yells.

*Mercenary.* O sweet sir, talk not of cows. You anger the spirit.

*Prince John.* Anger the scritch-owl.

*Mercenary.* But, my lord, the scritch-owl bodes death, my lord.

*Robin.* I beseech you all to speak lower. Robin may be hard by wi' three-score of his men. He often looks in here by the moonshine. Beware of Robin.

[OLD WOMAN yells.

*Mercenary.* Ay, do you hear? There may be murder done.

*Sheriff.* Have you not finished, my lord?

*Robin.* Thou hast crost him in love, and I have heard him swear he will be even wi' thee.

[OLD WOMAN yells.

*Mercenary.* Now is my heart so down in my heels that if I stay, I can't run.

*Sheriff.* Shall we not go?

*Robin.* And, old hag tho' I be, I can spell the hand. Give me thine. Ay, ay, the line o' life is marked enow; but look, there is a cross line o' sudden death. I pray thee go,

go, for tho' thou wouldst bar me fro' the milk o' my cow, I wouldn't have thy blood on my hearth.

*Prince John.* Why do you listen, man, to the old fool?

*Sheriff.* I will give thee a silver penny if thou wilt show us the way back to Notting-ham.

*Robin (with a very low curtesy).* All the sweet saints bless your worship for your alms to the old woman! but make haste then, and be silent in the wood. Follow me.

[Takes his bow.

(They come out of the hut and close the door carefully)

Outside hut

*Robin.* Softly! softly! there may be a thief in every bush.

*Prince John.* How should this old lamester guide us? Where is thy Goodman?

*Robin.* The saints were so kind to both on us that he was dead before he was born.

*Prince John.* Half-witted and a witch to boot! Mislead us, and I will have thy life! and what doest thou with that who art more bow-bent than the very bow thou carriest?

*Robin.* I keep it to kill nightingales.

*Prince John.* Nightingales!

*Robin.* You see, they are so fond o' their own voices that I cannot sleep o' nights by cause on 'em.

*Prince John.* True soul of the Saxon churl for whom song has no charm.

*Robin.* Then I roast 'em, for I have nought else to live on (*whines*). O your honour, I pray you too to give me an alms. (To PRINCE JOHN.)

*Sheriff.* This is no bow to hit nightingales; this is a true woodman's bow of the best yew-wood to slay the deer. Look, my lord, there goes one in the moonlight. Shoot!

*Prince John (shoots).* Missed! There goes another. Shoot, Sheriff!

*Sheriff (shoots).* Missed!

*Robin.* And here comes another. Why, an old woman can shoot closer than you two.

*Prince John.* Shoot then, and if thou miss I will fasten thee to thine own doorpost and make thine old carcase a target for us three.

*Robin (raises himself upright, shoots, and hits).* Hit! Did I not tell you an old woman could shoot better?

*Prince John.* Thou standest straight. Thou speakest manlike. Thou art no old woman—thou art disguised—thou art one of the thieves.

*[Makes a clutch at the gown, which comes in pieces and falls, showing ROBIN in his forester's dress.]*

*Sheriff.* It is the very captain of the thieves!

*Prince John.* We have him at last; we have him at advantage. Strike, Sheriff! Strike, mercenary!

*[They draw swords and attack him; he defends himself with his.]*

*Enter LITTLE JOHN*

*Little John.* I have lodged my pretty Katekin in her bower.

How now? Clashing of swords—three upon one, and that one our Robin! Rogues, have you no manhood?

*[Draws and defends ROBIN.]*

*Enter SIR RICHARD LEA (draws his sword)*

*Sir Richard Lea.* Old as I am, I will not brook to see Three upon two.

*[MAID MARIAN in the armour of a Redcross Knight follows, half unsheathing her sword and half-seen.]*

Back! back! I charge thee, back! Is this a game for thee to play at? Away.

*[She retires to the fringe of the copse. He fights on ROBIN's side. The other three are beaten off and exeunt.]*

*Enter FRIAR TUCK*

*Friar Tuck.* I am too late then with my quarterstaff!

*Robin.* Quick, friar, follow them: See whether there be more of 'em in the wood.

*Friar Tuck.* On the gallop, on the gallop,

Robin, like a deer from a dog, or a colt from a gad-fly, or a stump-tailed ox in May-time, or the cow that jumped over the moon. *[Exit.]*

*Robin.* Nay, nay, but softly, lest they spy thee, friar!

*[To SIR RICHARD LEA who reels.]*

Take thou mine arm. Who art thou, gallant knight?

*Sir Richard.* Robin, I am Sir Richard of the Lea.

Who be those three that I have fought withal?

*Robin.* Prince John, the Sheriff, and a mercenary.

*Sir Richard.* Prince John again. We are flying from this John.

The Sheriff—I am grieved it was the Sheriff;

For, Robin, he must be my son-in-law. Thou art an outlaw, and couldst never pay The mortgage on my land. Thou wilt not see

My Marian more. So—so—I have presumed

Beyond my strength. Give me a draught of wine.

*[MARIAN comes forward]*

This is my son but late escaped from prison,

For whom I ran into my debt to the Abbot, Two thousand marks in gold. I have paid him half.

That other thousand—shall I ever pay it? A draught of wine.

*Robin.* Our cellar is hard by. Take him, good Little John, and give him wine.

*[Exit SIR RICHARD leaning on LITTLE JOHN.]*

A brave old fellow but he angers me.

*[To MAID MARIAN who is following her father.]*

Young Walter, nay, I pray thee, stay a moment.

*Marian.* A moment for some matter of no moment!

Well—take and use your moment, while you may.

*Robin.* Thou art her brother, and her voice is thine,



Her face is thine, and if thou be as gentle  
Give me some news of my sweet Marian.  
Where is she?

*Marian.* Thy sweet Marian? I believe  
She came with me into the forest here.

*Robin.* She follow'd thee into the forest  
here?

*Marian.* Nay—that, my friend, I am  
sure I did not say.

*Robin.* Thou blowest hot and cold.  
Where is she then?

*Marian.* Is she not here with thee?

*Robin.* Would God she were!

*Marian.* If not with thee I know not  
where she is.

She may have lighted on your fairies here,  
And now be skipping in their fairy-rings,  
And capering hand in hand with Oberon.

*Robin.* Peace!

*Marian.* Or learning witchcraft of your  
woodland witch,  
And how to charm and waste the hearts of  
men.

*Robin.* That is not brother-like.

*Marian* (*pointing to the sky*). Or there  
perchance

Up yonder with the man i' the moon.

*Robin.* No more!

*Marian.* Or haply fallen a victim to the  
wolf.

*Robin.* Tut! be there wolves in Sher-  
wood?

*Marian.* The wolf, John!

*Robin.* Curse him! but thou art mocking  
me. Thou art

Her brother—I forgive thee. Come be thou  
My brother too. She loves me.

*Marian.* Doth she so?

*Robin.* Do you doubt me when I say  
she loves me, man?

*Marian.* No, but my father will not lose  
his land,

Rather than that would wed her with the  
Sheriff.

*Robin.* Thou hold'st with him?

*Marian.* Yes, in some sort I do.  
He is old and almost mad to keep the land.

*Robin.* Thou hold'st with him?

*Marian.* I tell thee, in some sort.

*Robin* (*angrily*). Sort! sort! what sort?  
what sort of man art thou

For land, not love? Thou wilt inherit the  
land,

And so wouldst sell thy sister to the  
Sheriff,

O thou unworthy brother of my dear  
Marian!

And now, I do bethink me, thou wast by  
And never drewest sword to help the old  
man

When he was fighting.

*Marian.* There were three to three.

*Robin.* Thou shouldst have ta'en his  
place, and fought for him.

*Marian.* He did it so well there was no  
call for me.

*Robin.* My God!

That such a brother—*she* marry the  
Sheriff!

Come now, I fain would have a bout with  
thee.

It is but pastime—nay, I will not harm  
thee.

Draw!

*Marian.* Earl, I would fight with any  
man but thee.

*Robin.* Ay, ay, because I have a name  
for prowess.

*Marian.* It is not that.

*Robin.* That! I believe thou fell'st into  
the hands

Of these same Moors thro' nature's base-  
ness, criedst

'I yield' almost before the thing was ask'd,  
And thro' thy lack of manhood hast  
betray'd

Thy father to the losing of his land.

Come, boy! 'tis but to see if thou canst  
fence.

Draw!

[*Draws.*

*Marian.* No, Sir Earl, I will not  
fight to-day.

*Robin.* To-morrow then?

*Marian.* Well, I will fight  
to-morrow.

*Robin.* Give me thy glove upon it.

*Marian* (*pulls off her glove and gives it to  
him*). There!

*Robin.* O God!

What sparkles in the moonlight on thy  
hand? [*Takes her hand.*

In that great heat to wed her to the Sheriff

## SCENE I

## THE FORESTERS

Thou hast robb'd my girl of her betrothal ring.

*Marian.* No, no!

*Robin.* What! do I not know mine own ring?

*Marian.* I keep it for her.

*Robin.* Nay, she swore it never Should leave her finger. Give it me, by heaven,  
Or I will force it from thee.

*Marian.* O Robin, Robin!

*Robin.* O my dear Marian,  
Is it thou? is it thou? I fall before thee,  
clasp

Thy knees. I am ashamed. Thou shalt not marry

The Sheriff, but abide with me who love thee.

*[She moves from him, the moonlight falls upon her.]*

O look! before the shadow of these dark oaks

Thou seem'st a saintly splendour out from heaven,

Clothed with the mystic silver of her moon.

Speak but one word not only of forgiveness,  
But to show thou art mortal.

*Marian.* Mortal enough,  
If love for thee be mortal. Lovers hold  
True love immortal. Robin, tho' I love thee,

We cannot come together in this world.  
Not mortal! after death, if after death—

*Robin (springing up).* Life, life. I know not death. Why do you vex me  
With raven-croaks of death and after death?

*Marian.* And I and he are passing over-seas:

He has a friend there will advance the monies,

So now the forest lawns are all as bright  
As ways to heaven, I pray thee give us guides

To lead us thro' the windings of the wood.

*Robin.* Must it be so? If it were so, myself

Would guide you thro' the forest to the sea.  
But go not yet, stay with us, and when thy brother—

*Marian.* Robin, I ever held that saying false

That Love is blind, but thou hast proven it true.

Why—even your woodland squirrel sees the nut

Behind the shell, and thee however mask'd I should have known. But thou—to dream that he

My brother, my dear Walter—now, perhaps,

Fetter'd and lash'd, a galley-slave, or closed

For ever in a Moorish tower, or wreckt  
And dead beneath the midland ocean, he  
As gentle as he's brave—that such as he  
Would wrest from me the precious ring I promised

Never to part with—No, not he, nor any.  
I would have battled for it to the death.

*[In her excitement she draws her sword.]*  
See, thou hast wrong'd my brother and myself.

*Robin (kneeling).* See then, I kneel once more to be forgiven.

*Enter SCARLET, MUCH, several of the FORESTERS, rushing on*

*Scarlet.* Look! look! he kneels! he has anger'd the foul witch,

Who melts a waxen image by the fire,  
And drains the heart and marrow from a man.

*Much.* Our Robin beaten, pleading for his life!

Seize on the knight! wrench his sword from him!

*[They all rush on MARIAN. Robin (springing up and waving his hand).]*

Back! Back!  
Back all of you! this is Maid Marian  
Lying from John—disguised.

*Men.* Maid Marian? she?

*Scarlet.* Captain, we saw thee cowering to a knight

And thought thou wert bewitch'd.

*Marian.* You dared to dream  
That our great Earl, the bravest English heart

Since Hereward the Wake, would cower to any

Of mortal build. Weak natures that impute  
Themselves to their unlikes, and their own  
want

Of manhood to their leader! he would  
break,

Far as he might, the power of John—but  
you—

What rightful cause could grow to such a  
heat

As burns a wrong to ashes, if the followers  
Of him, who heads the movement, held  
him craven?

Robin—I know not, can I trust myself  
With your brave band? in some of these  
may lodge

That baseness which for fear or monies,  
might

Betray me to the wild Prince.

Robin. No, love, no!  
Not any of these, I swear.

Men. No, no, we swear.

## SCENE II

*Another Glade in the Forest*

ROBIN and MARIAN *passing*

*Enter FORESTER*

Forester. Knight, your good father had  
his draught of wine

And then he swoon'd away. He had been  
hurt,

And bled beneath his armour. Now he  
cries

'The land! the land!' Come to him.

Marian. O my poor father!

Robin. Stay with us in this wood, till he  
recover.

We know all balms and simples of the field  
To help a wound. Stay with us here, sweet  
love,

Maid Marian, till thou wed what man thou  
wilt.

All here will prize thee, honour, worship  
thee,

Crown thee with flowers; and he will soon  
be well:

All will be well.

Marian. O lead me to my father!

[*As they are going out enter LITTLE  
JOHN and KATE who falls on the neck  
of MARIAN.*]

Kate. No, no, false knight, thou canst  
not hide thyself

From her who loves thee.

Little John.

What!

By all the devils in and out of Hell!

Wilt thou embrace thy sweetheart 'fore  
my face?

Quick with thy sword! the yeoman braves  
the knight.

There! (*strikes her with the flat of his sword*).

Marian (*laying about her*). Are the men  
all mad? there then, and there!

Kate. O hold thy hand! this is our  
Marian.

Little John. What! with this skill of  
fence! let go mine arm.

Robin. Down with thy sword! She is my  
queen and thine,

The mistress of the band.

Marian (*sheathing her sword*). A maiden  
now

Were ill-bested in these dark days of John,  
Except she could defend her innocence.

O lead me to my father.

[*Exeunt ROBIN and MARIAN.*]

Little John.

Speak to me,

I am like a boy now going to be whipt;  
I know I have done amiss, have been a fool.

Speak to me, Kate, and say you pardon me!

Kate. I never will speak word to thee  
again.

What? to mistrust the girl you say you love  
Is to mistrust your own love for your girl!  
How should you love if you mistrust your  
love?

Little John. O Kate, true love and  
jealousy are twins,

And love is joyful, innocent, beautiful,  
And jealousy is wither'd, sour and ugly:  
Yet are they twins and always go together.

Kate. Well, well, until they cease to go  
together,

I am but a stone and a dead stock to thee.

Little John. I thought I saw thee clasp  
and kiss a man

And it was but a woman. Pardon me.

Kate. Ay, for I much disdain thee, but  
if ever

Thou see me clasp and kiss a man indeed,  
I will again be thine, and not till then.

[*Exit.*]

*Little John.* I have been a fool and I have  
lost my Kate.

[*Exit.*]

*Re-enter ROBIN*

*Robin.* He dozes. I have left her watching  
him.  
She will not marry till her father yield.  
The old man dotes.  
Nay—and she will not marry till Richard  
come,  
And that's at latter Lammas—never per-  
haps.  
Besides, tho' Friar Tuck might make us  
one,  
An outlaw's bride may not be wife in law.  
I am weary. [*Lying down on a bank.*]  
What's here? a dead bat in the fairy ring—  
Yes, I remember, Scarlet hacking down  
A hollow ash, a bat flew out at him  
In the clear noon, and hook'd him by the  
hair,  
And he was scared and slew it. My men  
say  
The fairies haunt this glade;—if one could  
catch  
A glimpse of them and of their fairy  
Queen—  
Have our loud pastimes driven them all  
away?  
I never saw them: yet I could believe  
There came some evil fairy at my birth  
And cursed me, as the last heir of my race:  
'This boy will never wed the maid he loves,  
Nor leave a child behind him' (*yawns*).  
Weary—weary  
As tho' a spell were on me (*he dreams*).  
[*The whole stage lights up, and fairies  
are seen swinging on boughs and nest-  
ling in hollow trunks.*]

TITANIA on a hill, FAIRIES on either  
side of her, the moon above the hill.

*First Fairy.*

Evil fairy! do you hear?  
So he said who lieth here.

*Second Fairy.*

We be fairies of the wood,  
We be neither bad nor good.

*First Fairy.*

Back and side and hip and rib,  
Nip, nip him for his fib.

*Titania.*

Nip him not, but let him snore.  
We must flit for evermore.

*First Fairy.*

Tit, my queen, must it be so?  
Wherefore, wherefore should we go

*Titania.*

I Titania bid you flit,  
And you dare to call me Tit.

*First Fairy.*

Tit, for love and brevity,  
Not for love of levity.

*Titania.*

Pertest of our flickering mob,  
Wouldst thou call my Oberon Ob?

*First Fairy.*

Nay, an please your Elfin Grace,  
Never Ob before his face.

*Titania.*

Fairy realm is breaking down  
When the fairy slights the crown.

*First Fairy.*

No, by wisp and glowworm, no.  
Only wherefore should we go?

*Titania.*

We must fly from Robin Hood  
And this new queen of the wood.

*First Fairy.*

True, she is a goodly thing.  
Jealousy, jealousy of the king.

*Titania.*

Nay, for Oberon fled away  
Twenty thousand leagues to-day.

*Chorus.*

Look, there comes a deputation  
From our finikin fairy nation.

## THE FORESTERS

ACT I

*Enter several FAIRIES*

*Third Fairy.*

Crush'd my bat whereon I flew!  
Found him dead and drench'd in dew,  
Queen.

*Fourth Fairy.*

Quash'd my frog that used to quack  
When I vaulted on his back,  
Queen.

*Fifth Fairy.*

Kill'd the sward where'er they sat,  
Queen.

*Sixth Fairy.*

Lusty bracken beaten flat,  
Queen.

*Seventh Fairy.*

Honest daisy deadlly bruised,  
Queen.

*Eighth Fairy.*

Modest maiden lily abused,  
Queen.

*Ninth Fairy.*

Beetle's jewel armour crack'd,  
Queen.

*Tenth Fairy.*

Reed I rock'd upon broken-back'd,  
Queen.

*Fairies (in chorus).*

We be scared with song and shout.  
Arrows whistle all about.  
All our games be put to rout.  
All our rings be trampled out.  
Lead us thou to some deep glen,  
Far from solid foot of men,  
Never to return again,  
Queen.

*Titania (to FIRST FAIRY).*

Elf, with spiteful heart and eye,  
Talk of jealousy? You see why  
We must leave the wood and fly.

*(To all the FAIRIES, who sing at intervals with TITANIA)*

Up with you, out of the forest and over the  
hills and away,  
And over this Robin Hood's bay!  
Up thro' the light of the seas by the moon's  
long-silvering ray!  
To a land where the fay,  
Not an eye to survey,  
In the night, in the day,  
Can have frolic and play.  
Up with you, all of you, out of it! hear and  
obey.

Man, lying here alone,  
Moody creature,  
Of a nature  
Stronger, sadder than my own,  
Were I human, were I human,  
I could love you like a woman.  
Man, man,  
You shall wed your Marian.  
She is true, and you are true, -  
And you love her and she loves you;  
Both be happy, and adieu for ever and for  
evermore—adieu.  
*Robin (half making).* Shall I be happy?  
Happy vision, stay.

*Titania.*

Up with you, all of you, off with you, out  
of it, over the wood and away!

*Note.*—In the stage copy of my play I have had this Fairy Scene transferred to the end of the Third Act, for the sake of modern dramatic effect.

## ACT III

### THE CROWNING OF MARIAN

#### SCENE

#### *Heart of the Forest*

MARIAN and KATE (in *Foresters' green*)

*Kate.* What makes you seem so cold to  
Robin, lady?

*Marian.* What makes thee think I seem  
so cold to Robin?

*Kate.* You never whisper close as lovers  
do,

Nor care to leap into each other's arms.

*Marian.* There is a fence I cannot over-leap,  
My father's will.

*Kate.* Then you will wed the Sheriff?

*Marian.* When heaven falls, I may light  
on such a lark!

But who art thou to catechize me—thou  
That hast not made it up with Little John!

*Kate.* I wait till Little John makes up  
to me.

*Marian.* Why, my good Robin fancied  
me a man,

And drew his sword upon me, and Little  
John

Fancied he saw thee clasp and kiss a man.

*Kate.* Well, if he fancied that I fancy a  
man

Other than him, he is not the man for me.

*Marian.* And that would quite unman  
him, heart and soul.

For both are thine. (*Looking up.*)

But listen—overhead—

Fluting, and piping and luting 'Love, love,  
love'—

Those sweet tree-Cupids half-way up in  
heaven,

The birds—would I were one of 'em! O  
good Kate—

If my man-Robin were but a bird-Robin,  
How happily would we lilt among the  
leaves

'Love, love, love, love'—what merry mad-  
ness—listen!

And let them warm thy heart to Little  
John.

Look where he comes!

*Kate.* I will not meet him yet,  
I'll watch him from behind the trees, but  
call

Kate when you will, for I am close at hand.

*KATE stands aside and enter ROBIN, and after  
him at a little distance LITTLE JOHN,  
MUCH, the Miller's son, and SCARLET with  
an oaken chaplet, and other FORESTERS.*

*Little John.* My lord—Robin—I crave  
pardon—you always seem to me my lord  
—I Little John, he Much the miller's son,  
and he Scarlet, honouring all womankind,  
and more especially my lady Marian, do  
here, in the name of all our woodmen,

present her with this oaken chaplet as  
Queen of the wood, I Little John, he,  
young Scarlet, and he, old Much, and all  
the rest of us.

*Much.* And I, old Much, say as much,  
for being every inch a man I honour every  
inch of a woman.

*Robin.* Friend Scarlet, art thou less a  
man than Much?

Why art thou mute? Dost thou not honour  
woman?

*Scarlet.* Robin, I do, but I have a bad  
wife.

*Robin.* Then let her pass as an exception,  
Scarlet.

*Scarlet.* So I would, Robin, if any man  
would accept her.

*Marian (puts on the chaplet).* Had I a  
bulrush now in this right hand

For sceptre, I were like a queen indeed.

Comrades, I thank you for your loyalty,  
And take and wear this symbol of your  
love;

And were my kindly father sound again,  
Could live as happy as the larks in heaven,  
And join your feasts and all your forest  
games

As far as maiden might. Farewell, good  
fellows!

[*Exeunt several FORESTERS, the others  
withdraw to the back.*]

*Robin.* Sit here by me, where the most  
beaten track

Runs thro' the forest, hundreds of huge  
oaks,

Gnarld—older than the thrones of Europe  
—look,

What breadth, height, strength—torrents  
of eddying bark!

Some hollow-hearted from exceeding age—  
That never be thy lot or mine!—and some  
Pillaring a leaf-sky on their monstrous  
boles,

Sound at the core as we are. Fifty leagues  
Of woodland hear and know my horn, that  
scares

The Baron at the torture of his churls,

The pillage of his vassals.

O maiden-wife,  
The oppression of our people moves me so,  
That when I think of it hotly, Love himself

Seems but a ghost, but when thou feel'st  
with me

The ghost returns to Marian, clothes itself  
In maiden flesh and blood, and looks at  
once

Maid Marian, and that maiden freedom  
which

Would never brook the tyrant. Live thou  
maiden!

Thou art more my wife so feeling, than if  
my wife

And siding with these proud priests, and  
these Barons,

Devils, that make this blessed England hell.

*Marian.* Earl——

*Robin.* Nay, no Earl am I. I am English  
yeoman.

*Marian.* Then I am yeo-woman. O the  
clumsy word!

*Robin.* Take thou this light kiss for thy  
clumsy word.

Kiss me again.

*Marian.* Robin, I will not kiss thee,  
For that belongs to marriage; but I hold  
thee

The husband of my heart, the noblest  
light

That ever flash'd across my life, and I  
Embrace thee with the kisses of the soul.

*Robin.* I thank thee.

*Marian.* Scarlet told me—is it  
true?—

That John last week return'd to Notting-  
ham,

And all the foolish world is pressing thither.

*Robin.* Sit here, my queen, and judge  
the world with me.

Doubtless, like judges of another bench,  
However wise, we must at times have  
wrought

Some great injustice, yet, far as we knew,  
We never robb'd one friend of the true  
King.

We robb'd the traitors that are leagued  
with John;

We robb'd the lawyer who went against  
the law;

We spared the craftsman, chapman, all  
that live

By their own hands, the labourer, the poor  
priest;

We spoil'd the prior, friar, abbot, monk,  
For playing upside down with Holy Writ.  
'Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor;'  
Take all they have and give it to thyself!  
Then after we have cased them of their  
coins

It is our forest custom they should revel  
Along with Robin.

*Marian.* And if a woman pass——

*Robin.* Dear, in these days of Norman  
license, when

Our English maidens are their prey, if  
ever

A Norman damsel fell into our hands,  
In this dark wood when all was in our  
power

We never wrong'd a woman.

*Marian.* Noble Robin.

*Little John* (*coming forward*). Here come  
three beggars.

*Enter the three BEGGARS*

*Little John.* Toll!

*First Beggar.* Eh! we be beggars, we  
come to ask o' you. We ha' nothing.

*Second Beggar.* Rags, nothing but our  
rags.

*Thrd Beggar.* I have but one penny in  
pouch, and so you would make it two I  
should be grateful.

*Marian.* Beggars, you are sturdy rogues  
that should be set to work. You are those  
that tramp the country, filch the linen from  
the hawthorn, poison the house-dog, and  
scare lonely maidens at the farmstead.  
Search them, Little John.

*Little John.* These two have forty gold  
marks between them, Robin.

*Robin.* Cast them into our treasury, the  
beggars' mites. Part shall go to the alms-  
houses at Nottingham, part to the shrine  
of our Lady. Search this other.

*Little John.* He hath, as he said, but one  
penny.

*Robin.* Leave it with him and add a gold  
mark thereto. He hath spoken truth in a  
world of lies.

*Thrd Beggar.* I thank you, my lord.

*Little John.* A fine, a fine! he hath called  
plain Robin a lord. How much for a  
beggar?

*Robin.* Take his penny and leave him his gold mark.

*Little John.* Sit there, knaves, till the captain call for you.

*[They pass behind the trunk of an oak on the right.]*

*Marian.* Art thou not hard upon them, my good Robin?

*Robin.* They might be harder upon thee, if met in a black lane at midnight: the throat might gape before the tongue could cry who?

*Little John.* Here comes a citizen, and I think his wife.

*Enter CITIZEN and WIFE*

*Citizen.* That business which we have in Nottingham—

*Little John.* Halt!

*Citizen.* O dear wife, we have fallen into the hands Of Robin Hood.

*Marian.* And Robin Hood hath sworn— Shame on thee, Little John, thou hast forgotten—

That by the blessed Mother no man, so His own true wife came with him, should be stay'd

From passing onward. Fare you well, fair lady! *[Bowing to her.]*

*Robin.* And may your business thrive in Nottingham!

*Citizen.* I thank you, noble sir, the very blossom Of bandits. Curtsey to him, wife, and thank him.

*Wife.* I thank you, noble sir, and will pray for you That you may thrive, but in some kindlier trade.

*Citizen.* Away, away, wife, wilt thou anger him?

*[Exeunt CITIZEN and his WIFE.]*

*Little John.* Here come three friars.

*Robin.* Marian, thou and thy woman *(looking round),*

Why, where is Kate?

*Marian (calling).* Kate!

*Kate.* Here!

*Robin.* Thou and thy woman are a match

for three friars. Take thou my bow and arrow and compel them to pay toll.

*Marian.* Toll!

*Enter three FRIARS*

*First Friar (advancing).* Behold a pretty Dian of the wood,

Prettier than that same widow which you wot of.

Ha, brother. Toll, my dear? the toll of love.

*Marian (drawing bow).* Back! how much money hast thou in thy purse?

*First Friar.* Thou art playing with us. How should poor friars have money?

*Marian.* How much? how much? Speak, or the arrow flies.

*First Friar.* How much? well, now I bethink me, I have one mark in gold which a pious son of the Church gave me this morning on my setting forth.

*Marian (bending bow at the second).* And thou?

*Second Friar.* Well, as he said, one mark in gold.

*Marian (bending bow at the third).* And thou?

*Third Friar.* One mark in gold.

*Marian.* Search them, Kate, and see if they have spoken truth.

*Kate.* They are all mark'd men. They have told but a tenth of the truth: they have each ten marks in gold.

*Marian.* Leave them each what they say is theirs, and take the twenty-seven marks to the captain's treasury. Sit there till you be called for.

*First Friar.* We have fall'n into the hands of Robin Hood.

*[MARIAN and KATE return to ROBIN. The FRIARS pass behind an oak on the left.]*

*Robin.* Honour to thee, brave Marian, and thy Kate.

I know them arrant knaves in Nottingham. One half of this shall go to those they have wrong'd,

One half shall pass into our treasury.

Where lies that cask of wine whereof we plunder'd

The Norman prelate?



*Little John.* In that oak, where twelve  
Can stand upright, nor touch each other.

*Robin.* Good!  
Roll it in here. These friars, thieves, and  
liars,  
Shall drink the health of our new wood-  
land Queen.  
And they shall pledge thee, Marian, loud  
enough

To fright the wild hawk passing overhead,  
The mouldwarp underfoot.

*Marian.* They pledge me, Robin?  
The silent blessing of one honest man  
Is heard in heaven—the wassail yells of  
thief

And rogue and liar echo down in Hell,  
And wake the Devil, and I may sicken  
by 'em.

Well, well, be it so, thou strongest thief  
of all,  
For thou hast stolen my will, and made it  
thine.

FRIAR TUCK, LITTLE JOHN, MUCH,  
and SCARLET roll in cask

*Friar Tuck.* I marvel is it sack' or Mal-  
voisie?

*Robin.* Do me the service to tap it, and  
thou wilt know.

*Friar Tuck.* I would tap myself in thy  
service, Robin.

*Robin.* And thou wouldst run more wine  
than blood.

*Friar Tuck.* And both at thy service,  
Robin.

*Robin.* I believe thee, thou art a good  
fellow, though a friar.

[*They pour the wine into cups.*]

*Friar Tuck.* Fill to the brim. Our Robin,  
King o' the woods,

Wherever the horn sound, and the buck  
bound,

Robin, the people's friend, the King o' the  
woods!

[*They drink.*]  
*Robin.* To the brim and over till the  
green earth drink

Her health along with us in this rich  
draught,

And answer it in flowers. The Queen o'  
the woods,

Wherever the buck bound, and the horn  
sound,

Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods!

[*They drink.*]

Here, you three rogues,

[*To the BEGGARS. They come out.*]

You caught a lonely woodman of our band,  
And bruised him almost to the death, and  
took

His monies.

*Third Beggar.* Captain, nay, it wasn't me.

*Robin.* You ought to dangle up there  
among the crows.

Drink to the health of our new Queen o'  
the woods,

Or else be bound and beaten.

*First Beggar.* Sir, sir—well,

We drink the health of thy new Queen o'  
the woods.

*Robin.* Louder! louder! Maid Marian,  
Queen o' the woods!

*Beggars (shouting).* Maid Marian, Queen  
o' the woods: Queen o' the woods!

*First and Second Beggars (aside).* The  
black fiend grip her!

[*They drink.*]

*Robin (to the FRIARS).* And you three holy  
men,

[*They come out.*]

You worshippers of the Virgin, one of you  
Shamed a too trustful widow whom you  
heard

In her confession; and another—worse!—  
An innocent maid. Drink to the Queen o'  
the woods,

Or else be bound and beaten.

*First Friar.* Robin Hood,  
These be the lies the people tell of us,  
Because we seek to curb their viciousness.

However—to this maid, this Queen o' the  
woods.

*Robin.* Louder, louder, ye knaves. Maid  
Marian!

Queen o' the woods!

*Friars (shouting).* Maid Marian,  
Queen o' the woods.

*First Friar (aside).* Maid?

*Second Friar (aside).* Paramour!

*Third Friar (aside).* Hell take her!

[*They drink.*]

*Friar Tuck.* Robin, will you not hear one

of these beggars' catches? They can do it. I have heard 'em in the market at Mansfield.

*Little John.* No, my lord, hear ours—Robin—I crave pardon, I always think of you as my lord, but I may still say my lady; and, my lady, Kate and I have fallen out again, and I pray you to come between us again, for, my lady, we have made a song in your honour, so your ladyship care to listen.

*Robin.* Sing, and by St. Mary these beggars and these friars shall join you. Play the air, Little John.

*Little John.* Air and word, my lady, are maid and man. Join them and they are a true marriage; and so, I pray you, my lady, come between me and my Kate and make us one again. Scarlet, begin.

[*Playing the air on his viol.*]

*Scarlet.*

By all the deer that spring  
Thro' wood and lawn and ling,

When all the leaves are green;  
By arrow and gray goosewing,  
When horn and echo ring,  
We care so much for a King;

We care not much for a Queen—

For a Queen, for a Queen o' the woods.

*Marian.* Do you call that in my honour?

*Scarlet.* Bitters before dinner, my lady, to give you a relish. The first part—made before you came among us—they put it upon me because I have a bad wife. I love you all the same. Proceed.

[*All the rest sing.*]

By all the leaves of spring,

And all the birds that sing

When all the leaves are green

By arrow and by bowstring,

We care so much for a King

That we would die for a Queen—

For a Queen, for a Queen o' the woods.

*Enter FORESTER*

*Forester.* Black news, black news from Nottingham! I grieve

I am the Raven who croaks it. My lord John,

In wrath because you drove him from the forest,

Is coming with a swarm of mercenaries

To break our band and scatter us to the winds.

*Marian.* O Robin, Robin! See that men be set

Along the glades and passes of the wood  
To warn us of his coming! then each man  
That owns a wife or daughter, let him  
bury her

Even in the bowels of the earth to 'scape  
The glance of John—

*Robin.* You hear your Queen, obey!

## ACT IV

### THE CONCLUSION

#### SCENE

*A forest bower, cavern in background.*

*Sunrise*

*Marian (rising to meet ROBIN).* Robin,  
the sweet light of a mother's eye,  
That beam of dawn upon the opening  
flower,

Has never glanced upon me when a child.  
He was my father, mother, both in one.  
The love that children owe to both I give  
To him alone.

(*ROBIN offers to caress her*)

*Marian.* Quiet, good Robin, quiet!  
You lovers are such clumsy summer-flies  
For ever buzzing at your lady's face.

*Robin.* Bees rather, flying to the flower  
for honey.

*Marian (sings)*

The bee buzz'd up in the heat.

'I am faint for your honey, my sweet.'

The flower said 'Take it, my dear,

For now is the spring of the year.

So come, come!

'Hum!'

And the bee buzz'd down from the heat.

And the bee buzz'd up in the cold

When the flower was wither'd and old.

'Have you still any honey, my dear?'

She said 'It's the fall of the year,

But come, come!'

'Hum!'

And the bee buzz'd off in the cold.

*Robin.* Out on thy song!

*Marian.* Did I not sing it in tune?

*Robin.* No, sweetheart! out of tune with  
Love and me.  
*Marian.* And yet in tune with Nature  
and the bees.  
*Robin.* Out on it, I say, as out of tune  
and time!  
*Marian.* Till thou thyself shalt come to  
sing it—in time.  
*Robin (taking a tress of her hair in his  
hand).* Time! if his backward-working  
alchemy  
Should change this gold to silver, why, the  
silver  
Were dear as gold, the wrinkle as the dimple.  
Thy bee should buzz about the Court of  
John.  
No ribald John is Love, no wanton Prince,  
The ruler of an hour, but lawful King,  
Whose writ will run thro' all the range of  
life.  
Out upon all hard-hearted maidenhood!  
*Marian.* And out upon all simple  
batchelors!  
Ah, well! thou seest the land has come  
between us,  
And my sick father here has come between  
us  
And this rich Sheriff too has come between  
us;  
So, is it not all over now between us?  
Gone, like a deer that hath escaped thine  
arrow!  
*Robin.* What deer when I have mark'd  
him ever yet  
Escaped mine arrow? over is it? wilt thou  
Give me thy hand on that?  
*Marian.* Take it.  
*Robin (kisses her hand).* The Sheriff!  
This ring cries out against thee. Say it  
again,  
And by this ring the lips that never  
breathed  
Love's falsehood to true maid will seal  
Love's truth  
On those sweet lips that dare to dally  
with it.  
*Marian.* Quiet, quiet! or I will to my  
father.  
*Robin.* So, then, thy father will not grace  
our feast  
With his white beard to-day.

*Marian.* Being so sick  
How should he, Robin?  
*Robin.* Then that bond he hath  
Of the Abbot—wilt thou ask him for it?  
*Marian.* Why?  
*Robin.* I have sent to the Abbot and  
justiciary  
To bring their counter-bond into the  
forest.  
*Marian.* But will they come?  
*Robin.* If not I have let them know  
Their lives unsafe in any of these our  
woods,  
And in the winter I will fire their farms.  
But I have sworn by our Lady if they come  
I will not tear the bond, but see fair play  
Betwixt them and Sir Richard—promised  
too,  
So that they deal with us like honest men,  
They shall be handled with all courteous-  
ness.  
*Marian.* What wilt thou do with the  
bond then?  
*Robin.* Wait and see.  
What wilt thou do with the Sheriff?  
*Marian.* Wait and see.  
I bring the bond. [Exit MARIAN.  
*Enter* LITTLE JOHN, FRIAR TUCK, and MUCH,  
and FORESTERS and PEASANTS laughing and  
talking.  
*Robin.* Have ye glanced down thro' all  
the forest ways  
And mark'd if those two knaves from York  
be coming?  
*Little John.* Not yet, but here comes one  
of bigger mould. [Enter KING RICHARD.  
Art thou a knight?  
*King Richard.* I am.  
*Robin.* And walkest here  
Unarmour'd? all these walks are Robin  
Hood's  
And sometimes perilous.  
*King Richard.* Good! but having lived  
For twenty days and nights in mail, at last  
I crawl'd like a sick crab from my old  
shell,  
That I might breathe for a moment free of  
shield  
And cuirass in this forest where I dream'd

That all was peace—not even a Robin Hood—

(*Aside*) What if these knaves should know me for their King?

*Robin.* Art thou for Richard, or allied to John?

*King Richard.* I am allied to John.

*Robin.* The worse for thee.

*King Richard.* Art thou that banish'd lord of Huntingdon,

The chief of these outlaws who break the law?

*Robin.* I am the yeoman, plain Robin Hood, and being out of the law how should we break the law? if we broke into it again we should break the law, and then we were no longer outlaws.

*King Richard.* But, Earl, if thou be he—

*Friar Tuck.* Fine him! fine him! he hath called plain Robin an earl. How much is it, Robin, for a knight?

*Robin.* A mark.

*King Richard (gives it).* There.

*Robin.* Thou payest easily, like a good fellow,

But being o' John's side we must have thy gold.

*King Richard.* But I am more for Richard than for John.

*Robin.* What, what, a truckler! a word-eating coward!

Nay, search him then. How much hast thou about thee?

*King Richard.* I had one mark.

*Robin.* What more.

*King Richard.* No more, I think.

But how then if I will not bide to be search'd?

*Robin.* We are four to one.

*King Richard.* And I might deal with four.

*Robin.* Good, good, I love thee for that! but if I wind

This forest-horn of mine I can bring down Fourscore tall fellows on thee.

*King Richard.* Search me then.

I should be hard beset with thy fourscore.

*Little John (searching KING RICHARD).*

Robin, he hath no more. He hath spoken truth.

*Robin.* I am glad of it. Give him back his gold again.

*King Richard.* But I had liefer than this gold again—

Not having broken fast the livelong day—Something to eat.

*Robin.* And thou shalt have it, man.

Our feast is yonder, spread beneath an oak, Venison, and wild boar, hare, geese, besides

Hedge-pigs, a savoury viand, so thou be Squeamish at eating the King's venison.

*King Richard.* Nay, Robin, I am like thyself in that

I look on the King's venison as my own.

*Friar Tuck.* Ay, ay, Robin, but let him know our forest laws: he that pays not for his dinner must fight for it. In the sweat of thy brow, says Holy Writ, shalt thou eat bread, but in the sweat of thy brow and thy breast, and thine arms, and thy legs, and thy heart, and thy liver, and in the fear of thy life shalt thou eat the King's venison—ay, and so thou fight at quarterstaff for thy dinner with our Robin, that will give thee a new zest for it, though thou wert like a bottle full up to the cork, or as hollow as a kex, or the shambles-oak, or a weasel-sucked egg, or the head of a fool, or the heart of Prince John, or any other symbol of vacuity.

[*They bring out the quarterstaves, and the FORESTERS and PEASANTS crowd round to see the games, and applaud at intervals.*]

*King Richard.* Great woodland king, I know not quarterstaff.

*Little John.* A fine! a fine! He hath called plain Robin a king.

*Robin.* A shadow, a poetical fiction—did ye not call me king in your song?—a mere figure. Let it go by.

*Friar Tuck.* No figure, no fiction, Robin. What, is not man a hunting animal? And look you now, if we kill a stag, our dogs have their paws cut off, and the hunters, if caught, are blinded, or worse than blinded. Is that to be a king? If the king and the law work injustice, is not he that goes against the king and the law the true king in the sight of the King of kings? Thou art the

king of the forest, and I would thou wert the king of the land.

*King Richard.* This friar is of much boldness, noble captain.

*Robin.* He hath got it from the bottle, noble knight.

*Friar Tuck.* Boldness out of the bottle! I defy thee.

Boldness is in the blood, Truth in the bottle.

She lay so long at the bottom of her well  
In the cold water that she lost her voice,  
And so she glided up into the heart  
O' the bottle, the warm wine, and found it again.

*In vino veritas.* Shall I undertake  
The knight at quarterstaff, or thou?

*Robin.* Peacc, maggie!

Give him the quarterstaff. Nay, but thyself

Shalt play a bout with me, that he may see  
The fashion of it.

[*Plays with FRIAR TUCK at quarterstaff.*]

*King Richard.* Well, then, let me try.

[*They play.*]

I yield, I yield. I know no quarterstaff.

*Robin.* Then thou shalt play the game of buffets with us.

*King Richard.* What's that?

*Robin.* I stand up here, thou there. I give thee

A buffet, and thou me. The Holy Virgin  
Stand by the strongest. I am over-  
breathed,

Friar, by my two bouts at quarterstaff.

Take him and try him, friar.

*Friar Tuck.* There! [*Strikes.*]

*King Richard (strikes).* There!

[*FRIAR falls.*]

*Friar Tuck.* There!

Thou hast roll'd over the Church militant  
Like a tod of wool from wagon into ware-  
house.

Nay, I defy thee still. Try me an hour  
hence.

I am misty with my thimbleful of ale.

*Robin.* Thou seest, Sir Knight, our friar  
is so holy

That he's a miracle-monger, and can make  
Five quarts pass into a thimble. Up good  
Much.

*Friar Tuck.* And show thyself more of a  
man than me.

*Much.* Well, no man yet has ever bowl'd  
me down.

*Scarlet.* Ay, for old Much is every inch  
a man.

*Robin.* We should be all the more  
beholden to him.

*Much.* Much and more! much and more!  
I am the oldest of thy men, and thou and  
thy youngsters are always muching and  
moreing me.

*Robin.* Because thou art always so much  
more of a man than my youngsters, old  
Much.

*Much.* Well, we Muches be old.

*Robin.* Old as the hills.

*Much.* Old as the mill. We had it i' the  
Red King's time, and so I may be more of  
a man than to be bowled over like a ninepin.  
There!

[*Strikes.*]

*King Richard.* There! [*MUCH falls.*]

*Robin.* 'Much would have more,' says  
the proverb; but Much hath had more  
than enough. Give me thy hand, Much; I  
love thee (*lifts him up*). At him, Scarlet!

*Scarlet.* I cannot cope with him: my  
wrist is strain'd.

*King Richard.* Try, thyself, valorous  
Robin!

*Robin.* I am mortally afear'd o' thee,  
thou big man,  
But seeing valour is one against all odds,  
There!

*King Richard.* There!

[*ROBIN falls back, and is caught in  
the arms of LITTLE JOHN.*]

*Robin.* Good, now I love thee mightily,  
thou tall fellow.

Break thine alliance with this faithless  
John,  
And live with us and the birds in the green  
wood.

*King Richard.* I cannot break it, Robin,  
if I wish'd.

Still I am more for Richard than for  
John.

*Little John.* Look, Robin, at the far end  
of the glade

I see two figures crawling up the hill.

[*Distant sound of trumpets.*]

*Robin.* The Abbot of York and his justiciary.

*King Richard (aside).* They know me. I must not as yet be known.

Friends, your free sports have swallow'd my free hour.

Farewell at once, for I must hence upon The King's affair.

*Robin.* Not taste his venison first?

*Friar Tuck.* Hast thou not fought for it, and earn'd it? Stay, Dine with my brethren here, and on thine own.

*King Richard.* And which be they?

*Friar Tuck.* Geese, man! for how canst thou be thus allied

With John, and serve King Richard save thou be

A traitor or a goose? but stay with Robin; For Robin is no scatterbrains like Richard, Robin's a wise man, Richard a wiseacre, Robin's an outlaw, but he helps the poor. While Richard hath outlaw'd himself, and helps

Nor rich, nor poor. Richard's the king of courtesy,

For if he did me the good grace to kick me I could but sneak and smile and call it courtesy,

For he's a king.

And that is only courtesy *by* courtesy—

But Robin is a thief of courtesy

Whom they that suffer by him call the blossom

Of bandits. There—to be a thief of courtesy—

There is a trade of genius, there's glory!

Again, this Richard sacks and wastes a town

With random pillage, but our Robin takes From whom he knows are hypocrites and liars.

Again this Richard risks his life for a straw,

So lies in prison—while our Robin's life

Hangs by a thread, but he is a free man.

Richard, again, is king over a realm

He hardly knows, and Robin king of Sherwood,

And loves and dotes on every dingle of it.

Again this Richard is the lion of Cyprus,

Robin, the lion of Sherwood—may this mouth

Never suck grape again, if our true Robin Be not the nobler lion of the twain.

*King Richard.* Gramercy for thy preachment! if the land

Were ruleable by tongue, thou shouldst be king.

And yet thou know'st how little of thy king!

What was this realm of England, all the crowns

Of all this world, to Richard when he flung

His life, heart, soul into those holy wars

That sought to free the tomb-place of the King

Of all the world? thou, that art churchman too

In a fashion, and shouldst feel with him. Farewell!

I left mine horse and armour with a Squire, And I must see to 'em.

*Robin.* When wilt thou return?

*King Richard.* Return, I? when? when Richard will return.

*Robin.* No sooner? when will that be? canst thou tell?

But I have ta'en a sudden fancy to thee.

Accept this horn! if e'er thou be assail'd

In any of our forests, blow upon it

Three mots, this fashion—listen! (*blows*)

Canst thou do it!

[*KING RICHARD blows.*

Blown like a true son of the woods. Farewell! [*Exit KING RICHARD.*

*Enter ABBOT and JUSTICIARY.*

*Friar Tuck.* Church and Law, halt and pay toll!

*Justiciary.* Rogue, we have thy captain's safe-conduct; though he be the chief of rogues, he hath never broken his word.

*Abbot.* There is our bond.

[*Gives it to ROBIN.*

I thank thee.

*Robin.*

*Justiciary.*

Ay, but where, Where is this old Sir Richard of the Lea?

Thou told'st us we should meet him in the forest, Where he would pay us down his thousand marks.

*Robin.* Give him another month, and he will pay it.

*Justiciary.* We cannot give a month.

*Robin.* Why then a week.

*Justiciary.* No, not an hour: the debt is due to-day.

*Abbot.* Where is this laggard Richard of the Lea?

*Robin.* He hath been hurt, was growing whole again,

Only this morning in his agony

Lest he should fail to pay these thousand marks

He is stricken with a slight paralysis.

Have you no pity? must you see the man?

*Justiciary.* Ay, ay, what else? how else can this be settled?

*Robin.* Go men, and fetch him hither on the litter.

[*SIR RICHARD LEA is brought in.*

*MARIAN comes with him.*

*Marian.* Here is my father's bond.

[*Gives it to ROBIN HOOD.*

*Robin.* I thank thee, dear.

*Justiciary.* Sir Richard, it was agreed when you borrowed these monies from the Abbot that if they were not repaid within a limited time your land should be forfeit.

*Sir Richard.* The land! the land.

*Marian.* You see he is past himself. What would you more?

*Abbot.* What more? one thousand marks,

Or else the land.

You hide this damsel in your forest here,

[*Pointing to MARIAN.*

You hope to hold and keep her for yourself,

You heed not how you soil her maiden fame,

You scheme against her father's weal and hers,

For so this maid would wed our brother, he Would pay us all the debt at once, and thus This old Sir Richard might redeem his land.

He is all for love, he cares not for the land.

*Sir Richard.* The land, the land!

*Robin (giving two bags to the ABBOT).*

Here be one thousand marks

Out of our treasury to redeem the land.

[*Pointing to each of the bags.*

Half here, half there.

[*Plaudits from his band.*

*Justiciary.* Ay, ay, but there is use, four hundred marks.

*Robin (giving a bag to JUSTICIARY).* There then, four hundred marks.

[*Plaudits.*

*Justiciary.* What did I say?

Nay, my tongue tript—five hundred marks for use.

*Robin (giving another bag to him).* A hundred more? There then, a hundred more.

[*Plaudits.*

*Justiciary.* Ay, ay, but you see the bond and the letter of the law. It is stated there that these monies should be paid in to the Abbot at York, at the end of the month at noon, and they are delivered here in the wild wood an hour after noon.

*Marian.* The letter—O how often justice drowns

Between the law and letter of the law!

O God, I would the letter of the law

Were some strong fellow here in the wild wood,

That thou mightst beat him down at quarterstaff!

Have you no pity?

*Justiciary.* You run down your game, We ours. What pity have you for your game?

*Robin.* We needs must live. Our bowmen are so true

They strike the deer at once to death—he falls

And knows no more.

*Marian.* Pity, pity!—There was a man of ours

Up in the north, a goodly fellow too,

He met a stag there on so narrow a ledge—

A precipice above, and one below—

There was no room to advance or to retire.

The man lay down—the delicate-footed creature

Came stepping o'er him, so as not to harm him—

The hunter's passion flash'd into the man,

He drove his knife into the heart of the deer,

The deer fell dead to the bottom, and the man

Fell with him, and was crippled ever after. I fear I had small pity for that man.— You have the monies and the use of them. What would you more?

*Justiciary.* What? must we dance attendance all the day?

*Robin.* Dance! ay, by all the saints and all the devils ye shall dance. When the Church and the law have forgotten God's music, they shall dance to the music of the wild wood. Let the birds sing, and do you dance to their song. What, you will not? Strike up our music, Little John. (*He plays.*) They will not! Prick 'em in the calves with the arrow-points—prick 'em in the calves.

*Abbot.* Rogue, I am full of gout. I cannot dance.

*Robin.* And Sir Richard cannot redeem his land. Sweat out your gout, friend, for by my life, you shall dance till he can. Prick him in the calves!

*Justiciary.* Rogue, I have a swollen vein in my right leg, and if thou prick me there I shall die.

*Robin.* Prick him where thou wilt, so that he dance.

*Abbot.* Rogue, we come not alone.

*Justiciary.* Not the right.

*Abbot.* We told the Prince and the Sheriff of our coming.

*Justiciary.* Take the left leg for the love of God.

*Abbot.* They follow us.

*Justiciary.* You will all of you hang.

*Robin.* Let us hang, so thou dance meanwhile; or by that same love of God we will hang thee, prince or no prince, sheriff or no sheriff.

*Justiciary.* Take care, take care! I dance—I will dance—I dance.

[*ABBOT and JUSTICIARY dance to music, each holding a bag in each hand.*]

*Enter SCARLET*

*Scarlet.* The Sheriff! the Sheriff, follow'd by Prince John  
And all his mercenaries! We sighted 'em

Only this moment. By St. Nicholas  
They must have sprung like Ghosts from underground,  
Or, like the Devils they are, straight up from Hell.

*Robin.* Crouch all into the bush!

[*THE FORESTERS and PEASANTS hide behind the bushes.*]

*Marian.* Take up the litter!  
*Sir Richard.* Move me no more! I am sick and faint with pain!

*Marian.* But, Sir, the Sheriff—

*Sir Richard.* Let me be, I say!

The Sheriff will be welcome! let me be!

*Marian.* Give me my bow and arrows.

I remain

Beside my Father's litter.

*Robin.* And fear not thou!

Each of us has an arrow on the cord;

We all keep watch.

*Enter SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM*

*Sheriff.* Marian!

*Marian.* Speak not. I wait upon a dying father.

*Sheriff.* The debt hath not been paid. She will be mine.

What are you capering for? By old St. Vitus

Have you gone mad? Has it been paid?

*Abbot (dancing).*

O yes.

*Sheriff.* Have I lost her then?

*Justiciary (dancing).* Lost her? O no, we took

Advantage of the letter—O Lord, the vein!  
Not paid at York—the wood—prick me no more!

*Sheriff.* What pricks thee save it be thy conscience, man?

*Justiciary.* By my halidome I felt him at my leg still. Where be they gone to?

*Sheriff.* Thou art alone in the silence of the forest

Save for this maiden and thy brother Abbot,

And this old crazeling in the litter there.

*Enter on one side FRIAR TUCK from the bush, and on the other PRINCE JOHN and his*

*SPEARMEN, with banners and trumpets, etc.*

*Justiciary (examining his leg).* They have missed the vein.



*Abbot.* And we shall keep the land.  
*Sheriff.* Sweet Marian, by the letter of the law

It seems thy father's land is forfeited.  
*Sir Richard.* No! let me out of the litter.  
 He shall wed thee:

The land shall still be mine. Child, thou shalt wed him,  
 Or thine old father will go mad—he will,  
 He will—he feels it in his head.

*Marian.* O peace!  
 Father, I cannot marry till Richard comes.  
*Sir Richard.* And then the Sheriff!

*Marian.* Ay, the Sheriff, father,  
 Would buy me for a thousand marks in gold—

Sell me again perchance for twice as much.  
 A woman's heart is but a little thing,  
 Much lighter than a thousand marks in gold;

But pity for a father, it may be,  
 Is weightier than a thousand marks in gold.  
 I cannot love the Sheriff.

*Sir Richard.* But thou wilt wed him?

*Marian.* Ay, save King Richard, when he comes, forbid me.

Sweet heavens, I could wish that all the land

Were plunged beneath the waters of the sea,

Tho' all the world should go about in boats.

*Friar Tuck.* Why, so should all the love-sick be sea-sick.

*Marian.* Better than heart-sick, friar.

*Prince John* (to SHERIFF). See you not  
 They are jesting at us yonder, mocking us?  
 Carry her off, and let the old man die.

[*Advancing to MARIAN.*  
 Come, girl, thou shalt along with us on the instant.

*Friar Tuck* (brandishing his staff). Then on the instant I will break thy head.

*Sheriff.* Back, thou fool-friar! Knowest thou not the Prince?

*Friar Tuck* (muttering). He may be prince; he is not gentleman.

*Prince John.* Look! I will take the rope from off thy waist

And twist it round thy neck and hang thee by it.

Seize him and truss him up, and carry her off.

[*FRIAR TUCK slips into the bush. Marian* (drawing the bow). No nearer to me! back! My hand is firm,

Mine eye most true to one hair's-breadth of aim.

You, Prince, our king to come—you that dishonour

The daughters and the wives of your own faction—

Who hunger for the body, not the soul—  
 This gallant Prince would have me of his—what?

Household? or shall I call it by that new term

Brought from the sacred East, his harem?  
 Never,

Tho' you should queen me over all the realms

Held by King Richard, could I stoop so low

As mate with one that holds no love is pure,  
 No friendship sacred, values neither man  
 Nor woman save as tools—God help the mark—

To his own unprincely ends. And you, you, Sheriff,

[*Turning to the SHERIFF.*  
 Who thought to buy your marrying me with gold.

Marriage is of the soul, not of the body.  
 Win me you cannot, murder me you may,  
 And all I love, Robin, and all his men,  
 For I am one with him and his; but while  
 I breathe Heaven's air, and Heaven looks down on me,

And smiles at my best meanings, I remain  
 Mistress of mine own self and mine own soul.

[*Retreating, with bow drawn, to the bush. Robin!*

*Robin.* I am here, my arrow on the cord.  
 He dies who dares to touch thee.

*Prince John.* Advance, advance!  
 What, daunted by a garrulous, arrogant girl!

Seize her and carry her off into my castle.  
*Sheriff.* Thy castle!

*Prince John.* Said I not, I loved thee, man?

Risk not the love I bear thee for a girl.

*Sheriff.* Thy castle!

*Prince John.* See thou thwart me not,  
thou fool!

When Richard comes he is soft enough to  
pardon

His brother; but all those that held with  
him,

Except I plead for them, will hang as high  
As Haman.

*Sheriff.* She is mine. I have thy promise.

*Prince John.* O ay, she shall be thine—  
first mine, then thine.

For she shall spend her honeymoon with  
me.

*Sheriff.* Woe to that land shall own thee  
for her king!

*Prince John.* Advance, advance!

[*They advance shouting. The KING  
in armour reappears from the wood.*]

*King Richard.* What shouts are these  
that ring along the wood?

*Friar Tuck (coming forward).* Hail,  
knight, and help us. Here is one would  
clutch

Our pretty Marian for his paramour,  
This other, willy-nilly, for his bride.

*King Richard.* Damsel, is this the truth?

*Marian.* Ay, noble knight.

*Friar Tuck.* Ay, and she will not marry  
till Richard come.

*King Richard (raising his vizor).* I am  
here, and I am he.

*Prince John (lowering his, and whispering  
to his men).* It is not he—his face—  
tho' very like—

No, no! we have certain news he died in  
prison.

Make at him, all of you, a traitor coming  
In Richard's name—it is not he—not he.

[*The men stand amazed.*]

*Friar Tuck (going back to the bush).*

Robin, shall we not move?

*Robin.* It is the King

Who bears all down. Let him alone  
awhile.

He loves the chivalry of his single arm.  
Wait till he blow the horn.

*Friar Tuck (coming back).* If thou be  
king,

Be not a fool! Why blowest thou not the  
horn?

*King Richard.* I that have turn'd their  
Moslem crescent pale—

I blow the horn against this rascal rout!

[*FRIAR TUCK plucks the horn from him  
and blows. RICHARD dashes alone  
against the SHERIFF and JOHN's men,  
and is almost borne down, when ROBIN  
and his men rush in and rescue him.*]

*King Richard (to ROBIN HOOD).* Thou  
hast saved my head at the peril of  
thine own.

*Prince John.* A horse! a horse! I must  
away at once;

I cannot meet his eyes. I go to Nottingham.  
Sheriff, thou wilt find me at Nottingham.

[*Exit.*]

*Sheriff.* If anywhere, I shall find thee in  
hell.

What! go to slay his brother, and make me  
The monkey that should roast his chest-  
nuts for him!

*King Richard.* I fear to ask who left us  
even now.

*Robin.* I grieve to say it was thy father's  
son.

Shall I not after him and bring him back?

*King Richard.* No, let him be. Sheriff of  
Nottingham, [SHERIFF kneels.

I have been away from England all these  
years,

Heading the holy war against the Moslem,  
While thou and others in our kingless  
realms

Were fighting underhand unholy wars  
Against your lawful king.

*Sheriff.* My liege, Prince John—

*King Richard.* Say thou no word against  
my brother John.

*Sheriff.* Why then, my liege, I have no  
word to say.

*King Richard (to ROBIN).* My good friend  
Robin, Earl of Huntingdon,

For Earl thou art again, hast thou no fetters  
For those of thine own band who would  
betray thee?

*Robin.* I have; but these were never  
worn as yet.

I never found one traitor in my band.

*King Richard.* Thou art happier than  
thy king. Put him in chains.

[*They fetter the SHERIFF.*]

*Robin.* Look o'er these bonds, my liege.

[Shows the KING the bonds. They talk together.]

*King Richard.* You, my lord Abbot, you Justiciary,

[The ABBOT and JUSTICIARY kneel.]

I made you Abbot, you Justiciary:

You both are utter traitors to your king.

*Justiciary.* O my good liege, we did believe you dead.

*Robin.* Was justice dead because the King was dead?

Sir Richard paid his monies to the Abbot. You crost him with a quibble of your law.

*King Richard.* But on the faith and honour of a king

The land is his again.

*Sir Richard.* The land! the land!

I am crazed no longer, so I have the land.

[Comes out of the litter and kneels.]

God save the King!

*King Richard* (raising SIR RICHARD). I

thank thee, good Sir Richard.

Maid Marian.

*Marian.* Yes, King Richard.

*King Richard.* Thou wouldst marry This Sheriff when King Richard came again

Except—

*Marian.* The King forbad it. True, my liege.

*King Richard.* How if the King command it?

*Marian.* Then, my liege,

If you would marry me with a traitor sheriff,

I fear I might prove traitor with the sheriff.

*King Richard.* But if the King forbid thy marrying

With Robin, our good Earl of Huntingdon.

*Marian.* Then will I live for ever in the wild wood.

*Robin* (coming forward). And I with thee.

*King Richard.* On nuts and acorns, ha!

Or the King's deer? Earl, thou when we were hence

Hast broken all our Norman forest laws, And scruplest not to flaunt it to our face

That thou wilt break our forest laws again When we are here. Thou art overbold.

*Robin.*

My king, I am but the echo of the lips of love.

*King Richard.* Thou hast risk'd thy life for mine: bind these two men.

[They take the bags from the ABBOT and JUSTICIARY, and proceed to fetter them.]

*Justiciary.* But will the King, then, judge us all unheard?

I can defend my cause against the traitors Who fain would make me traitor. If the King

Condemn us without trial, men will call him An Eastern tyrant, not an English king.

*Abbot.* Besides, my liege, these men are outlaws, thieves,

They break thy forest laws—nay, by the rood

They have done far worse—they plunder —yea, ev'n bishops,

Yea, ev'n archbishops—if thou side with these,

Beware, O King, the vengeance of the Church.

*Friar Tuck* (brandishing his staff). I pray you, my liege, let me execute the vengeance of the Church upon them. I have a stout crabstick here, which longs to break itself across their backs.

*Robin.* Keep silence, bully friar, before the King.

*Friar Tuck.* If a cat may look at a king, may not a friar speak to one?

*King Richard.* I have had a year of prison-silence, Robin,

And heed him not—the vengeance of the Church!

Thou shalt pronounce the blessing of the Church

On those two here, Robin and Marian.

*Marian.* He is but hedge-priest, Sir King.

*King Richard.* And thou their Queen.

Our rebel Abbot then shall join your hands, Or lose all hope of pardon from us—yet Not now, not now—with after-dinner grace.

Nay, by the dragon of St. George, we shall Do some injustice, if you hold us here

Longer from our own venison. Where is it? I scent it in the green leaves of the wood.

*Marian.* First, king, a boon!

*King Richard.* Why surely ye are pardon'd,

Even this brawler of harsh truths—I trust  
Half truths, good friar: ye shall with us to court.

Then, if ye cannot breathe but woodland air,

Thou Robin shalt be ranger of this forest,  
And have thy fees, and break the law no more.

*Marian.* It is not that, my lord.

*King Richard.* Then what, my lady?

*Marian.* This is the gala-day of thy return.

I pray thee, for the moment strike the bonds

From these three men, and let them dine with us,

And lie with us among the flowers, and drink—

Ay, whether it be gall or honey to 'em—  
The king's good health in ale and Malvoisie.

*King Richard.* By Mahound I could dine with Beelzebub!

So now which way to the dinner?

*Marian.* Past the bank  
Of foxglove, then to left by that one yew.  
You see the darkness thro' the lighter leaf.  
But look, who comes?

*Enter SAILOR*

*Sailor.* We heard Sir Richard Lea was here with Robin.

O good Sir Richard, I am like the man  
In Holy Writ, who brought his talent back;  
For tho' we touch'd at many pirate ports,  
We ever fail'd to light upon thy son.  
Here is thy gold again. I am sorry for it.

*Sir Richard.* The gold—my son—my gold, my son, the land—

Here Abbot, Sheriff—no—no, Robin Hood.

*Robin.* Sir Richard, let that wait till we have dined.

Are all our guests here?

*King Richard.* No—there's yet one other:

I will not dine without him. Come from out

[*Enter WALTER LEA.*]

That oak-tree! This young warrior broke his prison

And join'd my banner in the Holy Land,  
And cleft the Moslem turban at my side.

My masters, welcome gallant Walter Lea.  
Kiss him, Sir Richard—kiss him, my sweet Marian.

*Marian.* O Walter, Walter, is it thou indeed

Whose ransom was our ruin, whose return  
Builds up our house again? I fear I dream.

Here—give me one sharp pinch upon the cheek

That I may feel thou art no phantom—yet  
Thou art tann'd almost beyond my knowing, brother.

[*They embrace.*]

*Walter Lea.* But thou art fair as ever, my sweet sister.

*Sir Richard.* Art thou my son?

*Walter Lea.* I am, good father, I am.

*Sir Richard.* I had despair'd of thee—that sent me crazed.

Thou art worth thy weight in all those marks of gold,  
Yea, and the weight of the very land itself,  
Down to the inmost centre.

*Robin.* Walter Lea,  
Give me that hand which fought for Richard there.

Embrace me, Marian, and thou, good Kate,  
[*To KATE entering.*]

Kiss and congratulate me, my good Kate.  
[*She kisses him.*]

*Little John.* Lo now! low now!

I have seen thee clasp and kiss a man indeed,

For our brave Robin is a man indeed.  
Then by thine own account thou shouldst be mine.

*Kate.* Well then, who kisses first?

*Little John.* Kiss both together.  
[*They kiss each other.*]

*Robin.* Then all is well. In this full tide of love,

Wave heralds wave: thy match shall follow mine (*to LITTLE JOHN*).

Would there were more—a hundred lovers more

To celebrate this advent of our King!  
Our forest games are ended, our free life,

## THE FORESTERS

## ACT IV

And we must hence to the King's court.  
I trust

We shall return to the wood. Meanwhile,  
farewell

Old friends, old patriarch oaks. A thousand  
winters

Will strip you bare as death, a thousand  
summers

Robe you life-green again. *You* seem, as it  
were,

Immortal, and we mortal. How few Junes  
Will heat our pulses quicker! How few  
frosts

Will chill the hearts that beat for Robin  
Hood!

*Marian.* And yet I think these oaks at  
dawn and even,

Or in the balmy breathings of the night,  
Will whisper evermore of Robin Hood.

We leave but happy memories to the forest.  
We dealt in the wild justice of the woods.

All those poor serfs whom we have served  
will bless us,

All those pale mouths which we have fed  
will praise us—

All widows we have holpen pray for us,

Our Lady's blessed shrines throughout the  
land

Be all the richer for us. You, good friar,  
You Much, you Scarlet, you dear Little  
John,

Your names will cling like ivy to the  
wood.

And here perhaps a hundred years away  
Some hunter in day-dreams or half asleep  
Will hear our arrows whizzing overhead,  
And catch the winding of a phantom horn.

*Robin.* And surely these old oaks will  
murmur thee

Marian along with Robin. I am most  
happy—

Art thou not mine?—and happy that our  
King

Is here again, never I trust to roam  
So far again, but dwell among his own.  
Strike up a stave, my masters, all is well.

### SONG WHILE THEY DANCE A COUNTRY DANCE

Now the King is home again, and nevermore to  
roam again,

Now the King is home again, the King will have  
his own again,

Home again, home again, and each will have  
his own again,

All the birds in merry Sherwood sing and sing  
him home again.

# DEMETER

## AND OTHER POEMS

### TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA

#### I

At times our Britain cannot rest,  
At times her steps are swift and rash;  
She moving, at her girdle clash  
The golden keys of East and West.

#### II

Not swift or rash, when late she lent  
The sceptres of her West, her East,  
To one, that ruling has increased  
Her greatness and her self-content.

#### III

Your rule has made the people love  
Their ruler. Your viceregal days  
Have added fulness to the phrase  
Of 'Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

#### IV

But since your name will grow with Time,  
Not all, as honouring your fair fame  
Of Statesman, have I made the name  
A golden portal to my rhyme:

#### V

But more, that you and yours may know  
From me and mine, how dear a debt  
We owed you, and are owing yet  
To you and yours, and still would owe.

#### VI

For he—your India was his Fate,  
And drew him over sea to you—  
He fain had ranged her thro' and thro',  
To serve her myriads and the State,—

#### VII

A soul that, watch'd from earliest youth,  
And on thro' many a brightening year,  
Had never swerved for craft or fear,  
By one side-path, from simple truth;

#### VIII

Who might have chased and claspt Renown  
And caught her chaplet here—and there  
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air  
The flame of life went wavering down;

#### IX

But ere he left your fatal shore,  
And lay on that funereal boat,  
Dying, 'Unspeakable' he wrote  
'Their kindness,' and he wrote no more;

#### X

And sacred is the latest word;  
And now the Was, the Might-have-  
been,  
And those lone rites I have not seen,  
And one drear sound I have not heard,

#### XI

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,  
Not there to bid my boy farewell,  
When 'That within the coffin fell,  
Fell—and flash'd into the Red Sea,

#### XII

Beneath a hard Arabian moon  
And alien stars. To question, why  
The sons before the fathers die,  
Not mine! and I may meet him soon;

#### XIII

But while my life's late eve endures,  
Nor settles into hueless gray,  
My memories of his briefer day  
Will mix with love for you and yours.

### ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

#### I

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd and  
faded,  
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,  
Since our Queen assumed the globe, the  
sceptre.

## ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

### II

She beloved for a kindliness  
Rare in Fable or History,  
Queen, and Empress of India,  
Crown'd so long with a diadem  
Never worn by a worthier,  
Now with prosperous auguries  
Comes at last to the bounteous  
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

### III

Nothing of the lawless, of the Despot,  
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglorious,  
All is gracious, gentle, great and Queenly.

### IV

You then joyfully, all of you,  
Set the mountain aflame to-night,  
Shoot your stars to the firmament,  
Deck your houses, illuminate  
All your towns for a festival,  
And in each let a multitude  
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,  
One full voice of allegiance,  
Hail the fair Ceremonial  
Of this year of her Jubilee.

### V

Queen, as true to womanhood as Queen-  
hood,  
Glorying in the glories of her people,  
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the lowest!

### VI

You, that wanton in affluence,  
Spare not now to be bountiful,  
Call you poor to regale with you,  
All the lowly, the destitute,  
Make their neighbourhood health-fuller,  
Give your gold to the Hospital,  
Let the weary be comforted,  
Let the needy be banqueted,  
Let the maim'd in his heart rejoice  
At this glad Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

### VII

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,  
Gray with distance Edward's fifty sum-  
mers,  
Ev'n her Grandsire's fifty half forgotten.

### VIII

You, the Patriot Architect,  
You that shape for Eternity,  
Raise a stately memorial,  
Make it regally gorgeous,  
Some Imperial Institute,  
Rich in symbol, in ornament,  
Which may speak to the centuries,  
All the centuries after us,  
Of this great Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

### IX

Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce!  
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science!  
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

### X

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,  
You, the Lord-territorial,  
You, the Lord-manufacturer;  
You, the hardy, laborious,  
Patient children of Albion,  
You, Canadian, Indian,  
Australasian, African,  
All your hearts be in harmony,  
All your voices in unison,  
Singing 'Hail to the glorious  
Golden year of her Jubilee!'

### XI

Are there thunders moaning in the  
distance?  
Are there spectres moving in the darkness?  
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her  
people,  
Till the thunders pass, the spectres vanish,  
And the Light is Victor, and the darkness  
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

## TO PROFESSOR JEBB

### WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

FAIR things are slow to fade away,  
Bear witness you, that yesterday<sup>1</sup>  
From out the Ghost of Pindar in you  
Roll'd an Olympian; and they say<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Bologna.

<sup>2</sup> They say, for the fact is doubtful.

## TO PROFESSOR JEBB

That here the torpid mummy wheat  
Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet

As that which gilds the glebe of England,  
Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

So may this legend for awhile,  
If greeted by your classic smile,  
Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,  
Blossom again on a colder isle.

### DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

(IN ENNA)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that flies  
All night across the darkness, and at dawn  
Falls on the threshold of her native land,  
And can no more, thou camest, O my child,  
Led upward by the God of ghosts and  
dreams,

Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and dumb  
With passing thro' at once from state to  
state,

Until I brought thee hither, that the day,  
When here thy hands let fall the gather'd  
flower,

Might break thro' clouded memories once  
again

On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale  
Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song  
And welcome; and a gleam as of the moon,  
When first she peers along the tremulous  
deep,

Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased  
away

That shadow of a likeness to the king  
Of shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone!  
Queen of the dead no more—my child!

Thine eyes

Again were human-godlike, and the Sun  
Burst from a swimming fleece of winter  
gray,

And robed thee in his day from head to  
feet—

'Mother!' and I was folded in thine arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd  
eyes

Awed even me at first, thy mother—eyes  
That oft had seen the serpent-wanded  
power

Draw downward into Hades with his drift

Of flickering spectres, lighted from below  
By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;  
But when before have Gods or men beheld  
The Life that had descended re-arise,  
And lighted from above him by the Sun?  
So mighty was the mother's childless cry,  
A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth, and  
Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,  
The field of Enna, now once more ablaze  
With flowers that brighten as thy footstep  
falls,

All flowers—but for one black blur of earth  
Left by that closing chasm, thro' which  
the car

Of dark Aidoneus rising rapt thee hence.  
And here, my child, tho' folded in thine  
arms,

I feel the deathless heart of motherhood  
Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe  
Should yawn once more into the gulf, and  
thence

The shrilly whinnings of the team of Hell,  
Ascending, pierce the glad and songful air,  
And all at once their arch'd necks, mid-  
night-maned,

Jet upward thro' the mid-day blossom. No!  
For, see, thy foot has touch'd it; all the  
space

Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself  
afresh,

And breaks into the crocus-purple hour  
That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,

I envied human wives, and nested birds,  
Yea, the cubb'd lioness; went in search of  
thee

Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and gave  
Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,  
And set the mother waking in amaze  
To find her sick one whole; and forth again  
Among the wail of midnight winds, and  
cried,

'Where is my loved one? Wherefore do ye  
wail?'

And out from all the night an answer  
shrill'd,

'We know not, and we know not why we  
wail.'



## DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,  
And ask'd the waves that moan about the  
world

'Where? do ye make your moaning for my  
child?'

And round from all the world the voices  
came

'We know not, and we know not why we  
moan.'

'Where'? and I stared from every eagle-  
peak,

I thridded the black heart of all the woods,  
I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in the  
storms

Of Autumn swept across the city, and  
heard

The murmur of their temples chanting me,  
Me, me, the desolate Mother! 'Where'?—  
and turn'd,

And fled by many a waste, forlorn of man,  
And grieved for man thro' all my grief for  
thee,—

The jungle rooted in his shatter'd hearth,  
The serpent coil'd about his broken shaft,  
The scorpion crawling over naked skulls;—  
I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane

Spring from his fallen God, but trace of  
thee

I saw not; and far on, and, following out  
A league of labyrinthine darkness, came  
On three gray heads beneath a gleaming  
rift.

'Where'? and I heard one voice from all  
the three

'We know not, for we spin the lives of men,  
And not of Gods, and know not why we  
spin!

There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying man,  
Without his knowledge, from him flits to  
warn

A far-off friendship that he comes no more,  
So he, the God of dreams, who heard my  
cry,

Drew from thyself the likeness of thyself  
Without thy knowledge, and thy shadow  
past

Before me, crying 'The Bright one in the  
highest

Is brother of the Dark one in the lowest,

And Bright and Dark have sworn that I,  
the child

Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee, the  
Power

That lifts her buried life from gloom to  
bloom,

Should be for ever and for evermore

The Bride of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wail'd.

Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the Gods  
of Heaven.

I would not mingle with their feasts; to me  
Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on the  
lips,

Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.

The man, that only lives and loves an  
hour,

Seem'd nobler than their hard Eternities.

My quick tears kill'd the flower, my ravings  
hush'd

The bird, and lost in utter grief I fail'd

To send my life thro' olive-yard and vine  
And golden grain, my gift to helpless man.

Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-  
spears

Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and the  
sun,

Pale at my grief, drew down before his  
time

Sickenings, and Ætna kept her winter snow.

Then He, the brother of this Darkness,  
He

Who still is highest, glancing from his  
height

On earth a fruitless fallow, when he miss'd

The wonted steam of sacrifice, the praise  
And prayer of men, decreed that thou  
should'st dwell

For nine white moons of each whole year  
with me,

Three dark ones in the shadow with thy  
King.

Once more the reaper in the gleam of  
dawn

Will see me by the landmark far away,  
Blessing his field, or seated in the dusk

Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,  
Rejoicing in the harvest and the grange.

## DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-content  
With them, who still are highest. Those  
gray heads,  
What meant they by their 'Fate beyond  
the Fates'

But younger kindlier Gods to bear us  
down,  
As we bore down the Gods before us?  
Gods,

To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt, to  
stay,

Not spread the plague, the famine; Gods  
indeed,

To send the noon into the night and break  
The sunless halls of Hades into Heaven?  
Till thy dark lord accept and love the  
Sun,

And all the Shadow die into the Light,  
When thou shalt dwell the whole bright  
year with me,

And souls of men, who grew beyond their  
race,

And made themselves as Gods against the  
fear

Of Death and Hell; and thou that hast  
from men,

As Queen of Death, that worship which is  
Fear,

Henceforth, as having risen from out the  
dead,

Shalt ever send thy life along with mine  
From buried grain thro' springing blade,  
and bless

Their garner'd Autumn also, reap with me,  
Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of  
Earth

The worship which is Love, and see no  
more

The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-glimmer-  
ing lawns

Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires  
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior glide  
Along the silent field of Asphodel.

### OWD ROĀ<sup>1</sup>

NAĀY, noā mander<sup>2</sup> o' use to be callin' 'im  
Roā, Roa, Roā,

Fur the dog's stoan-deaf, an' e's blind, 'e  
can naither stan' nor goā.

<sup>1</sup> Old Rover.

<sup>2</sup> Manner.

But I means fur to maake 'is owd aage as  
'appy as iver I can,

Fur I owas owd Roaver moor nor I iver  
owad mottal man.

Thou's rode of 'is back when a babby,  
afoor thou was gotten too owd,

Fur 'e'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e was  
allus as good as gowd.

Eh, but 'e'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e fowt;  
'e could howd' 'is oan,

An' Roā was the dog as knaw'd when an'  
whcere to bury his boane.

An' 'e kep his head hoop like a king, an'  
'e'd niver not down wi' 'is taal,

Fur 'e'd niver done nowt to be shaamed  
on, when we was i' Howlaby Daale.

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e lived,  
that, Dick, when 'e cooms to be dead,  
I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom soort  
of a sarvice read.

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Parliament  
man 'at stans fur us 'erc,

An' I'd voat fur 'im, my oan sen, if 'e could  
but stan fur the Shere.

'Faaithful an' True'—them words be 'i  
Scriptur—an' Faaithful an' True

Ull be fun'<sup>2</sup> upo' four short legs ten times  
fur one upo' two.

An' maäybe they'll walk upo' two but I  
knaws they runs upo' four,<sup>3</sup>—

Bedtime, Dicky! but waait till tha 'cars it  
be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roā when we  
lived i' Howlaby Daale,

Ten year sin—Naäy—naay! tha mun nob-  
but hev' one glass of aale.

Straänge an' owd-farran'd<sup>4</sup> the 'ouse, an'  
belt<sup>5</sup> long afoor my daäy

Wi' haafe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd<sup>6</sup> an'  
twined like a band o' haay.

<sup>1</sup> Hold.

<sup>2</sup> Found.

<sup>3</sup> 'Ou' as in 'house'.

<sup>4</sup> 'Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned.

<sup>5</sup> Built.

<sup>6</sup> 'Twizzen'd,' twisted.

# OWD ROÄ

The fellers as maakes them picturs, 'ud  
coom at the fall o' the year,  
An' settle their ends upo stools to pictur  
the door-poorch theree,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heads stannin'  
theree o' the brokken stick;<sup>1</sup>  
An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin<sup>2</sup> as graw'd  
hall ower the brick;

An' theree i' the 'ouse one night—but it's  
down, an' all on it now  
Goan into mangles an' tonups,<sup>3</sup> an, raaved  
slick thruf by the plow—

Theree, when the 'ouse wur a house, one  
night I wur sittin' aloan,  
Wi' Roäver athurt my fecat, an' sleeäpin  
still as a stoan,

Of a Christmas Eave, an' as cowl as this,  
an' the midders<sup>4</sup> as white,  
An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop wi'  
the windle<sup>5</sup> that night;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin alongside  
Roaver, but I wur awaake,  
An' smookin' an' thinkin' o' things—  
Doant maake thysen sick wi' the  
caake.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their  
songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,  
An' 'ed goan their waays; ther was nobbut  
three, an' noan on 'em theree.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the Ghoäst  
an' dussn't not sleeäp i' the 'ouse,  
But Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins<sup>6</sup> was  
nobbut a rat or a mouse.

An' I loookt out wonst<sup>7</sup> at the night, an'  
the daale was all of a thaw,  
Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like a  
long black snaake i' the snaw,

An' I heard greät heaps o' the snaw slushin'  
down fro' the bank to the beck,  
An' then as I stood i' the doorwaay, I  
feald it drip o' my neck.

<sup>1</sup> On a staff *ragulë*.

<sup>2</sup> Ivy. <sup>3</sup> Mangolds and turnips.

<sup>4</sup> Meadows. <sup>5</sup> Drifted snow.

<sup>6</sup> 'Moästlins,' for the most part, generally.

<sup>7</sup> Once.

Saw I turn'd in agean, an' I thowt o' the  
good owd times 'at was goan,  
An' the munney they maade by the war,  
an' the times 'at was coomin' on;

Fur I thowt if the Staate was a gawin' to  
let in furriners' wheat,  
Howiver was British farmers to stan' agean  
o' their fecat.

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an' to  
paay my men?  
An' all along o' the feller<sup>1</sup> as turn'd 'is back  
of hissen.

Thou slep i' the chaumber above us, we  
couldn't ha' 'eard tha call,  
Sa Moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha  
down, an' thy craadle an' all;

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi' tha  
then 'ed gotten wer leave,  
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by cause  
o' the Christmas Eäve;

But I clean forgot tha, my lad, when  
Moother 'ed gotten to bed,  
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an' the  
Freea Traade runn'd i' my 'ead,

Till I dream'd 'at Squire walkt in, an' I  
says to him 'Squire, ya're laate,'  
Then I seed at 'is faace wur as red as the  
Yule-block theer i' the graate.

An' 'e says 'can ya paäy me the rent  
to-night?' an' I says to 'im 'Noä,'  
An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm,<sup>2</sup>  
'Then hout to-night tha shall goä.'

'Tha'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin ma hout  
upo' Christmas Eave'?  
Then I waaked an' I fun it was Roaver  
a-tuggin' an' tearin' my slicave.

An' I thowt as 'e'd goän cleän-wud,<sup>3</sup> fur I  
noäwaäys knaw'd 'is intent;  
An' I says 'Git awaay, ya beast,' an' I  
fetcht 'im a kick an' 'e went.

Then 'e tummled up stairs, fur I 'eärd 'im,  
as if 'e'd 'a brokken 'is neck,  
An' I'd clear forgot, little Dicky, thy  
chaumber door wouldn't sneck;<sup>4</sup>

Peel. <sup>1</sup> Arm. <sup>2</sup> Mad. <sup>3</sup> Latch.

# OWD ROA

An' I slep' i' my chair agean wi' my hairm  
hingin' down to the floor,  
An' I thowt it was Roaver a-tuggin' an'  
tearin' me wuss nor afoor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im agean, but I  
kick'd thy Moother istead.  
'What arta snorin' theere fur? the house  
is afire,' she said.

Thy Moother 'ed bean a-naggin' about the  
gell o' the farm,  
She offens 'ud spy summut wrong when  
there warn't not a mossel o' harm;

An' she didn't not solidly mean I wur  
gawin' that wawy to the bad,  
Fur the gell<sup>1</sup> was as howry a trollope as  
iver traapes'd i' the squad.

But Moother was free of 'er tongue, as I  
offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,  
Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she was  
nobbut a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says 'I'd be good to tha, Bess, if tha'd  
onywaays let ma be good,'  
But she skelpt ma haafe ower i' the chair,  
an' screead like a Howl gone wud<sup>2</sup>—

'Ya mun run fur the lether.<sup>3</sup> Git oop, if  
ya're onywaays good for owt.'  
And I says 'If I beant noawaays—not  
nowadaays—good fur nowt—

Yit I beant sich a Nowt<sup>4</sup> of all Nowts as  
'ull hallus do as 'c's bid.'  
'But the stairs is afire,' she said; then I  
seed 'er a-cryin', I did.

An' she beald 'Ya mun saave little Dick,  
an' be sharp about it an' all,'  
Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an' sets  
'im agean the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder hin,  
when I gits to the top,  
But the heat druv hout i' my heyes till I  
feald mysen ready to drop.

<sup>1</sup> The girl was as dirty a slut as ever trudged  
in the mud, but there is a sense of slatternliness  
in 'traapes'd' which is not expressed in  
'trudged'.

<sup>2</sup> She half overturned me and shrieked like  
an owl gone mad.

<sup>3</sup> Ladder.

<sup>4</sup> A thoroughly insignificant or worthless  
person.

Thy Moother was howdin' the lether, an'  
tellin' me not to be skeard,  
An' I wasn't afeard, or I thinks leastwaays  
as I wasn't afeard;

But I couldn't see fur the smoake whcere  
thou was a-liggin', my lad,  
An' Roaver was theere i' the chaumber  
a-yowlin' an' yaupin' like mad;

An' thou was a-bealin' likewise, an' a-  
squealin', as if tha was bit,  
An' it wasn't a bite but a burn, fur the  
merck's<sup>1</sup> o' thy shou'd'er yit;

Then I call'd out Roa, Roa, Roa, thaw I  
didn't haafe think as 'e'd 'ear,  
But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my burn i'  
'is mouth to the winder theere!

He coom'd like a Hangel o' marcy as soon  
as 'e 'eard 'is naame,  
Or like tother Hangel i' Scriptur 'at sum-  
mun seed i' the flaame,

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an' 'e  
promised a son to she,  
An' Roa was as good as the Hangel i'  
saavin' a son fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says 'I mun  
gaw up agean fur Roa.'  
'Gaw up agean fur the varmint?' I tell'd  
'er 'Yeaas I mun goa.'

An' I claumb'd up agean to the winder,  
an' clemm'd<sup>2</sup> owd Roa by the 'ead,  
An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an' I  
taaked 'im at fust fur dead;

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein', an'  
seeam'd as blind as a poop,  
An' haafe on 'im bare as a bublin'.<sup>3</sup> I  
couldn't wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to the  
barn, fur the barn wouldn't burn  
Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother wawy, an'  
the wind wasn't like to turn.

An' I kep a-callin' o' Roa till 'e waggled 'is  
taail fur a bit,  
But the cocks kep a-crawin' an' crawin' all  
night, an' I 'ears 'em yit;

<sup>1</sup> Mark.

<sup>2</sup> Clutched.

<sup>3</sup> 'Bubbling,' a young unfledged bird.

## OWD ROÄ

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round, and  
thou was a-squealin' thyself,  
An' Moother was naggin' an' groanin' an'  
moanin' an' naggin' agean;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks<sup>1</sup>  
rummle down when the roof gev waay,  
Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raavin' an'  
roarin' like judgment daay.

Warm enew theree sewer-ly, but the barn  
was as cowl as owt,  
An' we cuddled and huddled together, an'  
happ<sup>2</sup> wersens oop as we mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but Moother 'ed  
bean sa soak'd wi' the thaw  
'At she catch'd 'er death o' cowl that  
night, poor soul, i' the straw.

Haafte o' the parish runn'd oop when the  
rigtree<sup>3</sup> was tummlin' in—  
Too laäte—but it's all ower now—hall  
hower—an' ten year sin;

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed, but I'll  
coom an' I'll quench the light,  
Fur we moant 'ev naw moor fires—and soa  
little Dick, good-night.

### VASTNESS

#### I

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe sighs  
after many a vanish'd face,  
Many a planet by many a sun may roll with  
the dust of a vanish'd race.

#### II

Raving politics, never at rest—as this poor  
earth's pale history runs,—  
What is it all but a trouble of ants in the  
gleam of a million million of suns?

#### III

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side,  
truthless violence mourn'd by the  
Wise,  
Thousands of voices drowning his own in  
a popular torrent of lies upon lies;

<sup>1</sup> Beams.

<sup>2</sup> Wrapt ourselves.

<sup>3</sup> The beam that runs along the roof of the  
house just beneath the ridge.

#### IV

Stately purposes, valour in battle, glorious  
annals of army and fleet,  
Death for the right cause, death for the  
wrong cause, trumpets of victory,  
groans of defeat;

#### V

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk,  
and Charity setting the martyr aflame;  
Thralldom who walks with the banner of  
Freedom, and recks not to ruin a  
realm in her name.

#### VI

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the  
gloom of doubts that darken the  
schools;  
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand,  
follow'd up by her vassal legion of  
fools;

#### VII

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her  
spice and her vintage, her silk and her  
corn;  
Desolate offing, sailorless harbours, famish-  
ing populace, wharves forlorn;

#### VIII

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise;  
gloom of the evening, Life at a close;  
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide down-  
way with her flying robe and her  
poison'd rose;

#### IX

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of  
Pleasure, a worm which writhes all  
day, and at night  
Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper,  
and stings him back to the curse of the  
light;

#### X

Wealth with his wines and his wedded  
harlots; honest Poverty, bare to the  
bone;  
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty; Flattery  
gilding the rift in a throne;

# VASTNESS

## XI

Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet  
a jubilant challenge to Time and to  
Fate;  
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on  
all the laurel'd graves of the Great;

## XII

Love for the maiden, crown'd with marriage,  
no regrets for aught that has been,  
Household happiness, gracious children,  
debtless competence, golden mean;

## XIII

National hatreds of whole generations, and  
pigmy spites of the village spire;  
Vows that will last to the last death-ruckle,  
and vows that are snapt in a moment  
of fire;

## XIV

He that has lived for the lust of the minute,  
and died in the doing it, flesh without  
mind;  
He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross, till  
Self died out in the love of his kind;

## XV

Spring and Summer and Autumn and  
Winter, and all these old revolutions  
of earth;  
All new-old revolutions of Empire—  
change of the tide—what is all of it  
worth?

## XVI

What the philosophies, all the sciences,  
poesy, varying voices of prayer?  
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that  
is filthy with all that is fair?

## XVII

What is it all, if we all of us end but in  
being our own corpse-coffins at last,  
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence,  
drown'd in the deeps of a meaningless  
Past?

## XVIII

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom,  
or a moment's anger of bees in their  
hive?—

\* \* \* \*

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and love  
him for ever: the dead are not dead  
but alive.

**Dedicated to the Hon. J. Russell  
Lowell**

## THE RING

### MIRIAM AND HER FATHER

*Miriam (singing)*

MELLOW moon of heaven,  
Bright in blue,  
Moon of married hearts,  
Hear me, you!

Twelve times in the year  
Bring me bliss,  
Gloving Honey Moons  
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times  
From the night.  
Young again you grow  
Out of sight.

Silver crescent-curve,  
Coming soon,  
Globe again, and make  
Honey Moon.

Shall not *my* love last,  
Moon, with you,  
For ten thousand years  
Old and new?

*Father.* And who was he with such love-  
drunken eyes  
They made a thousand honey moons of  
one?

*Miriam.* The prophet of his own, my  
Hubert—his  
The words, and mine the setting. 'Air and  
Words,'  
Said Hubert, when I sang the song, 'are  
bride  
And bridegroom.' Does it please you?

## THE RING

*Father.* Mainly, child,  
Because I hear your Mother's voice in  
yours.

She—, why, you shiver tho' the wind is  
west

With all the warmth of summer.

*Miriam.* Well, I felt  
On a sudden I know not what, a breath  
that past

With all the cold of winter.

*Father (muttering to himself).* Even so.  
The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that once  
was Man,

But cannot wholly free itself from Man,  
Are calling to each other thro' a dawn  
Stranger than earth has ever seen; the veil  
Is rending, and the Voices of the day  
Are heard across the Voices of the dark.

No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for  
man,

But thro' the Will of One who knows and  
rules—

And utter knowledge is but utter love—  
Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,  
Thro' all the Spheres—an ever opening  
height,

An ever lessening earth—and she perhaps,  
My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly link  
With me to-day.

*Miriam.* You speak so low, what is it?  
Your 'Miriam breaks'—is making a new  
link

Breaking an old one?

*Father.* No, for we, my child,  
Have been till now each other's all-in-all.

*Miriam.* And you the lifelong guardian  
of the child.

*Father.* I, and one other whom you have  
not known.

*Miriam.* And who? what other?

*Father.* Whither are you bound?  
For Naples which we only left in May?

*Miriam.* No! father, Spain, but Hubert  
brings me home

With April and the swallow. Wish me joy!

*Father.* What need to wish when Hubert  
weds in you

The heart of Love, and you the soul of  
Truth

In Hubert?

*Miriam.* Tho' you used to call me once

The lonely maiden-Princess of the wood,  
Who meant to sleep her hundred summers  
out

Before a kiss should wake her.

*Father.* Ay, but now  
Your fairy Prince has found you, take this  
ring.

*Miriam.* 'Io t'amo'—and these diamonds  
—beautiful!

'From Walter,' and for me from you then?

*Father.* Well,  
One way for Miriam.

*Miriam.* Miriam am I not?

*Father.* This ring bequeath'd you by  
your mother, child,

Was to be given you—such her dying  
wish—

Given on the morning when you came of  
age

Or on the day you married. Both the days  
Now close in one. The ring is doubly  
yours.

Why do you look so gravely at the tower?

*Miriam.* I never saw it yet so all ablaze  
With creepers crimsoning to the pinnacles,  
As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,  
And all ablaze too in the lake below!

And how the birds that circle round the  
tower

Are cheeping to each other of their flight  
To summer lands!

*Father.* And that has made you grave?  
Fly—care not. Birds and brides must leave  
the nest.

Child, I am happier in your happiness  
Than in mine own.

*Miriam.* It is not that!

*Father.* What else?

*Miriam.* That chamber in the tower.

*Father.* What chamber, child?  
Your nurse is here?

*Miriam.* My Mother's nurse and mine.  
She comes to dress me in my bridal veil.

*Father.* What did she say?

*Miriam.* She said, that you and I  
Had been abroad for my poor health so  
long

She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I  
ask'd

About my Mother, and she said, 'Thy hair  
Is golden like thy Mother's, not so fine.'

## THE RING

*Father.* What then? what more?

*Miriam.* She said—perhaps indeed  
She wander'd, having wander'd now so far  
Beyond the common date of death—that  
you,

When I was smaller than the statuette  
Of my dear Mother on your bracket here—  
You took me to that chamber in the tower,  
The topmost—a chest there, by which you  
knelt—

And there were books and dresses—left to  
me,

A ring too which you kiss'd, and I, she  
said,

I babbled, Mother, Mother—as I used  
To prattle to her picture—stretch'd my  
hands

As if I saw her; then a woman came  
And caught me from my nurse. I hear  
her yet—

A sound of anger like a distant storm.

*Father.* Garrulous old crone.

*Miriam.* Poor nurse!

*Father.* I bad her keep,

Like a seal'd book, all mention of the  
ring,

For I myself would tell you all to-day.

*Miriam.* 'She too might speak to-day,'  
she mumbled. Still,

I scarce have learnt the title of your book,  
But you will turn the pages.

*Father.* Ay, to-day!

I brought you to that chamber on your  
third

September birthday with your nurse, and  
felt

An icy breath play on me, while I stoopt  
To take and kiss the ring.

*Miriam.* This very ring

Is t'amo?

*Father.* Yes, for some wild hope  
was mine

That, in the misery of my married life,  
Miriam your Mother might appear to me.  
She came to you, not me. The storm, you  
hear

Far-off, is Muriel—your stepmother's  
voice.

*Miriam.* Vext, that you thought my  
Mother came to me?

Or at my crying 'Mother?' or to find

My Mother's diamonds hidden from her  
there,

Like worldly beauties in the Cell, not  
shown

To dazzle all that see them?

*Father.* Wait a while.

Your Mother and step-mother—Miriam

Erne

And Muriel Erne—the two were cousins—  
lived

With Muriel's mother on the down, that  
sees

A thousand squares of corn and meadow,  
far

As the gray deep, a landscape which your  
eyes

I have many a time ranged over when a  
babe.

*Miriam.* I climb'd the hill with Hubert  
yesterday,

And from the thousand squares, one silent  
voice

Came on the wind, and seem'd to say  
'Again.'

We saw far off an old forsaken house,  
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

*Father.* And there

I found these cousins often by the brook,  
For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw  
the fly;

The girls of equal age, but one was fair,  
And one was dark, and both were beautiful.  
No voice for either spoke within my heart  
Then, for the surface eye, that only doats  
On outward beauty, glancing from the one  
To the other, knew not that which pleased  
it most,

The raven ringlet or the gold; but both  
Were dowerless, and myself, I used to  
walk

This Terrace—morbid, melancholy; mine  
And yet not mine the hall, the farm, the  
field;

For all that ample woodland whisper'd  
'debt,'

The brook that feeds this lakelet murmur'd  
'debt,'

And in yon arching avenue of old elms,  
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober  
rook

And carrion crow cry 'Mortgage.'



## THE RING

*Miriam.* Father's fault  
Visited on the children!

*Father.* Ay, but then  
A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to  
Rome—

He left me wealth—and while I journey'd  
hence,

And saw the world fly by me like a dream,  
And while I communed with my truest  
self,

I woke to all of truest in myself,  
Till, in the gleam of those mid-summer  
dawns,

The form of Muriel faded, and the face  
Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew;  
And past and future mix'd in Heaven and  
made

The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

*Miriam.* So glad? no tear for him, who  
left you wealth,

Your kinsman?

*Father.* I had seen the man but once;  
He loved my name not me; and then I  
pass'd

Home, and thro' Venice, where a jeweller,  
So far gone down, or so far up in life,  
That he was nearing his own hundred,  
sold

'This ring to me, then laugh'd 'the ring is  
weird.'

And weird and worn and wizard-like was  
he.

'Why weird?' I ask'd him; and he said  
'The souls

Of two repentant Lovers guard the ring;'  
Then with a ribald twinkle in his bleak  
eyes—

'And if you give the ring to any maid,  
They still remember what it cost them  
here,

And bind the maid to love you by the ring;  
And if the ring were stolen from the maid,  
The theft were death or madness to the  
thief.

So sacred those Ghost Lovers hold the  
gift.'

And then he told their legend:

'Long ago  
Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale  
Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting sent  
This ring "Io t'amo" to his best beloved,

And sent it on her birthday. She in wrath  
Return'd it on her birthday, and that day  
His death-day, when, half-frenzied by the  
ring,

He wildly fought a rival suitor, him  
The causer of that scandal, fought and fell;  
And she that came to part them all too late,  
And found a corpse and silence, drew the  
ring

From his dead finger, wore it till her death,  
Shrined him within the temple of her  
heart,

Made every moment of her after life  
A virgin victim to his memory,  
And dying rose, and rear'd her arms, and  
cried

"I see him, Io t'amo, Io t'amo."

*Miriam.* Legend or true? so tender  
should be true!

Did he believe it? did you ask him?

*Father.* Ay!  
But that half skeleton, like a barren ghost  
From out the fleshless world of spirits,  
laugh'd:

A hollow laughter!

*Miriam.* Vile, so near the ghost  
Himself, to laugh at love in death! But  
you?

*Father.* Well, as the bygone lover thro'  
this ring

Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I  
Would call thro' this 'Io t'amo' to the  
heart

Of Miriam; then I bad the man engrave  
'From Walter' on the ring, and send it—  
wrote

Name, surname, all as clear as noon, but  
he—

Some younger hand must have engraven  
the ring—

His fingers were so stiffen'd by the frost  
Of seven and ninety winters, that he  
scrawl'd

A 'Miriam' that might seem a 'Muriel';  
And Muriel claim'd and open'd what I  
meant

For Miriam, took the ring, and flaunted it  
Before that other whom I loved and love.

A mountain stay'd me here, a minster  
there,

A galleried palace, or a battlefield,

## THE RING

Where stood the sheaf of Peace: but—  
coming home—

And on your Mother's birthday—all but  
yours—

A week betwixt—and when the tower as  
now

Was all ablaze with crimson to the roof,  
And all ablaze too plunging in the lake  
Head-foremost—who were those that  
stood between

The tower and that rich phantom of the  
tower?

Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and like  
May-blossoms in mid autumn—was it  
they?

A light shot upward on them from the lake.  
What sparkled there? whose hand was  
that? they stood

So close together. I am not keen of sight,  
But coming nearer—Muriel had the ring—  
'O Miriam! have you given your ring to  
her?

O Miriam!' Miriam redden'd, Muriel  
clench'd

The hand that wore it, till I cried again:  
'O Miriam, if you love me take the ring!'  
She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was  
mute.

'Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be.'

Then—Muriel standing ever statue-like—  
She turn'd, and in her soft imperial way  
And saying gently: 'Muriel, by your leave,'  
Unclosed the hand, and from it drew the  
ring,

And gave it me, who pass'd it down her  
own,

'To t'amo, all is well then.' Muriel fled.

*Miriam.* Poor Muriel!

*Father.* Ay, poor Muriel  
when you hear

What follows! Miriam loved me from the  
first,

Not thro' the ring; but on her marriage-  
morn

This birthday, death-day, and betrothal  
ring,

Laid on her table overnight, was gone;  
And after hours of search and doubt and  
threats,

And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it,  
'See!—

Found in a chink of that old moulder'd  
floor!'

My Miriam nodded with a pitying smile,  
As who should say 'that those who lose  
can find.'

Then I and she were married for a year,  
One year without a storm, or even a cloud;  
And you my Miriam born within the year;  
And she my Miriam dead within the year.

I sat beside her dying, and she gaspt:  
'The books, the miniature, the lace are  
hers,

My ring too when she comes of age, or  
when

She marries; you—you loved me, kept  
your word.

You love me still "To t'amo."—Muriel—  
no—

She cannot love; she loves her own hard  
self,

Her firm will, her fix'd purpose. Promise  
me,

Miriam not Muriel—she shall have the  
ring.'

And there the light of other life, which  
lives

Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,  
Gleam'd for a moment in her own on earth.  
I swore the vow, then with my latest kiss  
Upon them, closed her eyes, which would  
not close,

But kept their watch upon the ring and you.  
Your birthday was her death-day.

*Miriam.*

O poor Mother!  
And you, poor desolate Father, and poor  
me,

The little senseless, worthless, wordless  
babe,

Saved when your life was wreck'd!

*Father.*

Desolate? yes!  
Desolate as that sailor, whom the storm  
Had parted from his comrade in the boat,  
And dash'd half dead on barren sands,  
was I.

Nay, you were my one solace; only—you  
Were always ailing. Muriel's mother sent,  
And sure am I, by Muriel, one day came  
And saw you, shook her head, and patted  
yours,

And smiled, and making with a kindly  
pinch

## THE RING

Each poor pale cheek a momentary rose—  
 'That should be fix'd,' she said; 'your  
 pretty bud,  
 So blighted here, would flower into full  
 health  
 Among our heath and bracken. Let her  
 come!  
 And we will feed her with our mountain  
 air,  
 And send her home to you rejoicing.' No—  
 We could not part. And once, when you  
 my girl  
 Rode on my shoulder home—the tiny fist  
 Had graspt a daisy from your Mother's  
 grave—  
 By the lych-gate was Muriel. 'Ay,' she  
 said,  
 'Among the tombs in this damp vale of  
 yours!  
 You scorn my Mother's warning, but the  
 child  
 Is paler than before. We often walk  
 In open sun, and see beneath our feet  
 The mist of autumn gather from your lake,  
 And shroud the tower; and once we only  
 saw  
 Your gilded vane, a light above the mist'—  
 (Our old bright bird that still is veering  
 there  
 Above his four gold letters) 'and the light,'  
 She said, 'was like that light'—and there  
 she paused,  
 And long; till I believing that the girl's  
 Lean fancy, groping for it, could not find  
 One likeness, laugh'd a little and found  
 her two—  
 'A warrior's crest above the cloud of  
 war'—  
 'A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,  
 The pyre he burnt in.'—'Nay,' she said,  
 'the light  
 That glimmers on the marsh and on the  
 grave.'  
 And spoke no more, but turn'd and pass'd  
 away.  
 Miriam, I am not surely one of those  
 Caught by the flower that closes on the fly,  
 But after ten slow weeks her fix'd intent,  
 In aiming at an all but hopeless mark  
 To strike it, struck; I took, I left you there;  
 I came, I went, was happier day by day;

For Muriel nursed you with a mother's  
 care;  
 Till on that clear and heather-scented  
 height  
 The rounder cheek had brighten'd into  
 bloom.  
 She always came to meet me carrying you,  
 And all her talk was of the babe she loved;  
 So, following her old pastime of the brook,  
 She threw the fly for me; but oftener left  
 That angling to the mother. 'Muriel's  
 health  
 Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam.  
 Strange!  
 She used to shun the wailing babe, and  
 doats  
 On this of yours.' But when the matron  
 saw  
 That hinted love was only wasted bait,  
 Not risen to, she was bolder. 'Ever since  
 You sent the fatal ring'—I told her 'sent  
 To Miriam,' 'Doubtless—ay, but ever  
 since  
 In all the world my dear one sees but  
 you—  
 In your sweet babe she finds but you—she  
 makes  
 Her heart a mirror that reflects but you.'  
 And then the tear fell, the voice broke.  
*Her heart!*  
 I gazed into the mirror, as a man  
 Who sees his face in water, and a stone,  
 That glances from the bottom of the pool,  
 Strike upward thro' the shadow; yet at  
 last,  
 Gratitude—loneliness—desire to keep  
 So skilled a nurse about you always—nay!  
 Some half remorseful kind of pity too—  
 Well! well, you know I married Muriel  
 Erne.  
 'I take thee Muriel for my wedded  
 wife'—  
 I had forgotten it was your birthday,  
 child—  
 When all at once with some electric thrill  
 A cold air pass'd between us, and the  
 hands  
 Fell from each other, and were join'd again.  
 No second cloudless honeymoon was  
 mine.  
 For by and by she sicken'd of the farce,

## THE RING

She dropt the gracious mask of mother-  
hood,  
She came no more to meet me, carrying  
you,  
Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,  
Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,  
Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly smile,  
Nor ever ceased to clamour for the ring;  
Why had I sent the ring at first to her?  
Why had I made her love me thro' the  
ring,  
And then had changed? so fickle are men  
—the best!

Not she—but now my love was hers again,  
The ring by right, she said, was hers again.  
At times too shrilling in her angrier moods,  
'That weak and watery nature love you?  
No!

"*Io t'amo, Io t'amo*!" flung herself  
Against my heart, but often while her lips  
Were warm upon my cheek, an icy breath,  
As from the grating of a sepulchre,  
Past over both. I told her of my vow,  
No pliable idiot I to break my vow;  
But still she made her outcry for the ring;  
For one monotonous fancy madden'd her,  
Till I myself was madden'd with her cry,  
And even that '*Io t'amo*,' those three sweet  
Italian words, became a weariness.

My people too were scared with eerie  
sounds,  
A footstep, a low throbbing in the walls,  
A noise of falling weights that never fell,  
Weird whispers, bells that rang without a  
hand,  
Door-handles turn'd when none was at the  
door,  
And bolted doors that open'd of them-  
selves:  
And one betwixt the dark and light had  
seen

*Her*, bending by the cradle of her babe.

*Miriam*. And I remember once that  
being waked  
By noises in the house—and no one near—  
I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle hand  
Fall on my forehead, and a sudden face  
Look'd in upon me like a gleam and pass'd,  
And I was quieted, and slept again.  
Or is it some half memory of a dream?

*Father*. Your fifth September birthday.

*Miriam*. And the face,  
The hand,—my Mother.

*Father*. *Miriam*, on that day  
Two lovers parted by no scurrilous tale—  
Mere want of gold—and still for twenty  
years  
Bound by the golden cord of their first  
love—  
Had ask'd us to their marriage, and to  
share

Their marriage-banquet. *Muriel*, paler  
then  
Than ever you were in your cradle,  
moan'd,

'I am fitter for my bed, or for my grave,  
I cannot go, go you.' And then she rose,  
She clung to me with such a hard embrace,  
So lingeringly long, that half-amazed  
I parted from her, and I went alone.  
And when the bridegroom murmur'd, 'With  
this ring,'

I felt for what I could not find, the key,  
The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.  
I kept it as a sacred amulet  
About me,—gone! and gone in that  
embrace!

Then, hurrying home, I found her not in  
house

Or garden—up the tower—an icy air  
Fled by me.—There, the chest was open  
—all

The sacred relics tost about the floor—  
Among them *Muriel* lying on her face—  
I raised her, call'd her '*Muriel, Muriel*  
wake!'

The fatal ring lay near her; the glazed eye  
Glared at me as in horror. Dead! I took  
And chafed the freezing hand. A red mark  
ran

All round one finger pointed straight, the  
rest

Were crumpled inwards. Dead!—and  
maybe stung

With some remorse, had stolen, worn the  
ring—

Then torn it from her finger, or as if—  
For never had I seen her show remorse—  
As if—

*Miriam*. —those two Ghost lovers—  
*Father*. Lovers yet—

*Miriam*. Yes, yes!

## THE RING

*Father.* —but dead so long, gone up so far,  
That now their ever-rising life has dwarf'd  
Or lost the moment of their past on earth,  
As we forget our wail at being born.  
As if—

*Miriam.*—a dearer ghost had—

*Father.* —wrench'd it away.

*Miriam.* Had floated in with sad reproachful eyes,  
Till from her own hand she had torn the ring  
In fright, and fallen dead. And I myself  
Am half afraid to wear it.

*Father.* Well, no more!  
No bridal music this! but fear not you!  
You have the ring she guarded; that poor link

With earth is broken, and has left her free,  
Except that, still drawn downward for an hour,

Her spirit hovering by the church, where she

Was married too, may linger, till she sees  
Her maiden coming like a Queen, who leaves

Some colder province in the North to gain

Her capital city, where the loyal bells  
Clash welcome—linger, till her own, the babe

She lean'd to from her Spiritual sphere,  
Her lonely maiden-Princess, crown'd with flowers,

Has enter'd on the larger woman-world  
Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil—  
Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me child  
and go.

## FORLORN

### I

'He is fled—I wish him dead—  
He that wrought my ruin—  
O the flattery and the craft  
Which were my undoing . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
When the storms are blowing.

### II

'Who was witness of the crime?  
Who shall now reveal it?  
He is fled, or he is dead,  
Marriage will conceal it . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
While the gloom is growing.'

### III

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,  
What is this you're dreaming?  
There is laughter down in Hell  
At your simple scheming . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
When the ghosts are fleeing.

### IV

You to place a hand in his  
Like an honest woman's,  
You that lie with wasted lungs  
Waiting for your summons . . .  
In the night, O the night!  
O the deathwatch beating!

### V

There will come a witness soon  
Hard to be confuted,  
All the world will hear a voice  
Scream you are polluted . . .  
In the night! O the night,  
When the owls are wailing!

### VI

Shame and marriage, Shame and marriage,  
Fright and foul dissembling,  
Bantering bridesman, reddening priest,  
Tower and altar trembling . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
When the mind is failing!

### VII

Mother, dare you kill your child?  
How your hand is shaking!  
Daughter of the seed of Cain,  
What is this you're taking? . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
While the house is sleeping.

### VIII

Dreadful! has it come to this,  
O unhappy creature?  
You that would not tread on a worm

## FORLORN

For your gentle nature . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
O the night of weeping!

### X

Murder would not veil your sin,  
Marriage will not hide it,  
Earth and Hell will brand your name,  
Wretch you must abide it . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
Long before the dawning.

### X

Up, get up, and tell him all,  
Tell him you were lying!  
Do not die with a lie in your mouth,  
You that know you're dying . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
While the grave is yawning.

### XI

No—you will not die before,  
Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger;  
You will live till *that* is born,  
Then a little longer . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
While the Fiend is prowling.

### XII

Death and marriage, Death and marriage!  
Funeral hearses rolling!  
Black with bridal favours mixt!  
Bridal bells with tolling! . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
When the wolves are howling.

### XIII

Up, get up, the time is short,  
Tell him now or never!  
Tell him all before you die,  
Lest you die for ever . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
Where there's no forgetting.

### XIV

Up she got, and wrote him all,  
All her tale of sadness,  
Blister'd every word with tears,  
And eased her heart of madness . . .  
In the night, and nigh the dawn,  
And while the moon was setting.

## HAPPY

### THE LEPER'S BRIDE

#### I

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and what is  
it that you fear?  
Is he sick your mate like mine? have you  
lost him, is he fled?  
And there—the heron rises from his watch  
beside the mere,  
And flies above the leper's hut, where  
lives the living-dead.

#### II

Come back, nor let me know it! would he  
live and die alone?  
And has he now forgiven me yet, his  
over-jealous bride,  
Who am, and was, and will be his, his own  
and only own,  
To share his living death with him, die  
with him side by side?

#### III

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary moor,  
Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn, and  
wears the leper's weed?  
The door is open. He! is he standing at the  
door,  
My soldier of the Cross? it is he and he  
indeed!

#### IV

My roses—will he take them *now*—mine,  
his—from off the tree  
We planted both together, happy in our  
marriage morn?  
O God, I could blaspheme, for he fought  
Thy fight for Thee,  
And Thou hast made him leper to com-  
pass him with scorn—

#### V

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the  
coward and the base,  
And set a crueller mark than Cain's on  
him, the good and brave!  
He sees me, waves me from him. I will  
front him face to face.  
You need not wave me from you. I  
would leap into your grave.

\* \* \* \* \*

## HAPPY

### VI

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of the  
conquering sword,  
The roses that you cast aside—once  
more I bring you these.  
No nearer? do you scorn me when you  
tell me, O my lord,  
You would not mar the beauty of your  
bride with your disease.

### VII

You say your body is so foul—then here I  
stand apart,  
Who yearn to lay my loving head upon  
your leprous breast.  
The leper plague may scale my skin but  
never taint my heart;  
Your body is not foul to me, and body  
is foul at best.

### VIII

I loved you first when young and fair, but  
now I love you most;  
The fairest flesh at last is filth on which  
the worm will feast;  
This poor rib-grated dungeon of the holy  
human ghost,  
This house with all its hateful needs no  
cleaner than the beast,

### IX

This coarse diseased creature which in  
Eden was divine,  
This Satan-haunted ruin, this little city  
of sewers,  
This wall of solid flesh that comes between  
your soul and mine,  
Will vanish and give place to the beauty  
that endures,

### X

The beauty that endures on the Spiritual  
height,  
When we shall stand transfigured, like  
Christ on Hermon hill,  
And moving each to music, soul in soul  
and light in light,  
Shall flash thro' one another in a moment  
as we will.

### XI

Foul! foul! the word was yours not mine,  
I worship that right hand  
Which fell'd the foes before you as the  
woodman fells the wood,  
And sway'd the sword that lighten'd back  
the sun of Holy land,  
And clove the Moslem crescent moon,  
and changed it into blood.

### XII

And once I worshipt all too well this  
creature of decay,  
For Age will chink the face, and Death  
will freeze the supplest limbs—  
Yet you in your mid manhood—O the  
grief when yesterday  
They bore the Cross before you to the  
chant of funeral hymns.

### XIII

'Libera me, Domine!' you sang the Psalm,  
and when  
The Priest pronounced you dead, and  
flung the mould upon your feet,  
A beauty came upon your face, not that of  
living men,  
But seen upon the silent brow when life  
has ceased to beat.

### XIV

'Libera nos, Domine'—you knew not one  
was there  
Who saw you kneel beside your bier,  
and weeping scarce could see;  
May I come a little nearer, I that heard,  
and changed the prayer  
And sang the married 'nos' for the  
solitary 'me.'

### XV

My beauty marred by you? by you! so be  
it. All is well  
If I lose it and myself in the higher  
beauty, yours.  
My beauty lured that falcon from his eyry  
on the fell,  
Who never caught one gleam of the  
beauty which endures—

## HAPPY

### XVI

The Count who sought to snap the bond  
that link'd us life to life,  
Who whisper'd me 'your Ulric loves'—  
a little nearer still—  
He hiss'd, 'Let us revenge ourselves, your  
Ulric woos my wife'—  
A lie by which he thought he could  
subdue me to his will.

### XVII

I knew that you were near me when I let  
him kiss my brow;  
*Did* he touch me on the lips? I was  
jealous, anger'd, vain,  
And I meant to make *you* jealous. Are you  
jealous of me now?  
Your pardon, O my love, if I ever gave  
you pain.

### XVIII

You never once accused me, but I wept  
alone, and sigh'd  
In the winter of the Present for the  
summer of the Past;  
That icy winter silence—how it froze you  
from your bride,  
Tho' I made one barren effort to break  
it at the last.

### XIX

I brought you, you remember, these roses,  
when I knew  
You were parting for the war, and you  
took them tho' you frown'd;  
You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them.  
All at once the trumpet blew,  
And you spurr'd your fiery horse, and  
you hurl'd them to the ground.

### XX

You parted for the Holy War without a  
word to me,  
And clear myself unask'd—not I. My  
nature was too proud.  
And him I saw but once again, and far  
away was he,  
When I was praying in a storm—the  
crash was long and loud—

### XXI

That God would ever slant His bolt from  
falling on your head—  
Then I lifted up my eyes, he was coming  
down the fell—  
I clapt my hands. The sudden fire from  
Heaven had dash'd him dead,  
And sent him charr'd and blasted to the  
deathless fire of Hell.

### XXII

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I repented  
and repent,  
And trust myself forgiven by the God  
to whom I kneel.  
A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly be  
content  
Till I be leper like yourself, my love  
from head to heel.

### XXIII

O foolish dreams, that you, that I, would  
slight our marriage oath:  
I held you at that moment even dearer  
than before;  
Now God has made you leper in His loving  
care for both,  
That we might cling together never  
doubt each other more.

### XXIV

The Priest, who join'd you to the dead,  
has join'd our hands of old;  
If man and wife be but one flesh, let  
mine be leprous too,  
As dead from all the human race as if  
beneath the mould;  
If you be dead, then I am dead, who  
only live for you.

### XXV

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be  
follow'd by the Moon?  
The leech forsake the dying bed for  
terror of his life?  
The shadow leave the Substance in the  
brooding light of noon?  
Or if I had been the leper would you  
have left the wife?



## HAPPY

### XXVI

Not take them? Still you wave me off—  
 poor roses—must I go—  
 I have worn them year by year—from  
 the bush we both had set—  
 What? fling them to you?—well—that  
 were hardly gracious. No!  
 Your plague but passes by the touch.  
 A little nearer yet!

### XXVII

There, there! he buried you, the Priest;  
 the Priest is not to blame,  
 He joins us once again, to his either  
 office true:  
 I thank him. I am happy, happy. Kiss me.  
 In the name  
 Of the everlasting God, I will live and  
 die with you.

[DEAN MILMAN has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public welfare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprosy differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest conducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm 'Libera me domine', and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions: 'I forbid you entering the church . . . or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress.' He concluded: 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual

follow these sad words: 'When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard.' At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprosy, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography* will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, St. Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds.—BOUCHER-JAMPS.]

This ceremony of quasi-burial varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

## TO ULYSSES<sup>1</sup>

### I

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,  
 Whose eyes have known this globe of  
 ours,  
 Her tribes of men, and trees, and flowers,  
 From Corrientes to Japan,

### II

To you that bask below the Line,  
 I soaking here in winter wet—  
 The century's three strong eights have  
 met  
 To drag me down to seventy-nine

### III

In summer if I reach my day—  
 To you, yet young, who breathe the  
 balm  
 Of summer-winters by the palm  
 And orange grove of Paraguay,

### IV

I tolerant of the colder time,  
 Who love the winter woods, to trace  
 On paler heavens the branching grace  
 Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

<sup>1</sup> 'Ulysses,' the title of a number of essays by W. G. Palgrave. He died at Monte Video before seeing my poem.

## TO ULYSSES

### V

And see my cedar green, and there  
My giant ilex keeping leaf  
When frost is keen and days are brief—  
Or marvel how in English air

### VI

My yucca, which no winter quells,  
Altho' the months have scarce begun,  
Has push'd toward our faintest sun  
A spike of half-accomplish'd bells—

### VII

Or watch the waving pine which here  
'The warrior of Caprera set,<sup>1</sup>  
A name that earth will not forget  
Till earth has roll'd her latest year—

### VIII

I, once half-crazed for larger light  
On broader zones beyond the foam,  
But charming fancy now at home  
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

### IX

Not less would yield full thanks to you  
For your rich gift, your tale of lands  
I know not,<sup>2</sup> your Arabian sands;  
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bamboo,

### X

The wealth of tropic bower and brake;  
Your Oriental Eden-isles,<sup>3</sup>  
Where man, nor only Nature smiles;  
Your wonder of the boiling lake;<sup>4</sup>

### XI

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,<sup>5</sup>  
Phra-bat<sup>6</sup> the step; your Pontic coast;  
Crag-cloister;<sup>7</sup> Anatolian Ghost;<sup>8</sup>  
Hong-Kong,<sup>9</sup> Karnac,<sup>10</sup> and all the rest.

<sup>1</sup> Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, 'I wish I had your trees.'

<sup>2</sup> The tale of Nejd.

<sup>3</sup> The Philippines.

<sup>4</sup> In Dominica.

<sup>5</sup> The Shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

<sup>6</sup> The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

<sup>7</sup> The monastery of Sumelas.

<sup>8</sup> Anatolian Spectre stories.

<sup>9</sup> The Three Cities.

<sup>10</sup> Travels in Egypt.

### XII

Thro' which I follow'd line by line  
Your leading hand, and came, my friend,  
To prize your various book, and send  
A gift of slenderer value, mine.

## TO MARY BOYLE

### WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

#### I

'SPRING-FLOWERS'! While you still delay  
to take  
Your leave of Town,  
Our elmtree's ruddy-hearted blossom-flake  
Is fluttering down.

#### II

Be truer to your promise. There! I heard  
Our cuckoo call.  
Be needle to the magnet of your word,  
Nor wait, till all

#### III

Our vernal bloom from every vale and  
plain  
And garden pass,  
And all the gold from each laburnum chain  
Drop to the grass.

#### IV

Is memory with your Marian gone to rest,  
Dead with the dead?  
For ere she left us, when we met, you prest  
My hand, and said

#### V

'I come with your spring-flowers.' You  
came not, friend;  
My birds would sing,  
You heard not. Take then this spring-  
flower I send,  
This song of spring,

#### VI

Found yesterday—forgotten mine own  
rhyme  
By mine old self,  
As I shall be forgotten by old Time,  
Laid on the shelf—

## TO MARY BOYLE

### VII

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the whiten-  
ing sloe  
And kingcup blaze,  
And more than half a hundred years ago,  
In rick-fire days,

### VIII

When Dives loathed the times, and paced  
his land  
In fear of worse,  
And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant hand  
Fill with *his* purse.

### IX

For lowly minds were madden'd to the  
height  
By tonguester tricks,  
And once—I well remember that red night  
When thirty ricks,

### X

All flaming, made an English homestead  
Hell—  
These hands of mine  
Have help to pass a bucket from the well  
Along the line,

### XI

When this bare dome had not begun to  
gleam  
Thro' youthful curls,  
And you were then a lover's fairy dream,  
His girl of girls;

### XII

And you, that now are lonely, and with  
Grief  
Sit face to face,  
Might find a flickering glimmer of relief  
In change of place.

### XIII

What use to brood? this life of mingled  
pains  
And joys to me,  
Despite of every Faith and Creed, remains  
The Mystery.

### XIV

Let golden youth bewail the friend, the  
wife,  
For ever gone.

He dreams of that long walk thro' desert  
life  
Without the one.

### XV

The silver year should cease to mourn and  
sigh—  
Not long to wait—  
So close are we, dear Mary, you and I  
To that dim gate.

### XVI

Take, read! and be the faults your Poet  
makes  
Or many or few,  
He rests content, if his young music wakes  
A wish in you

### XVII

To change our dark Queen-city, all her  
realm  
Of sound and smoke, ~  
For his clear heaven, and these few lanes  
of elm  
And whispering oak.

## THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

### I

THE groundflame of the crocus breaks the  
mould,  
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the  
Southern sea,  
Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop  
cold  
That trembles not to kisses of the bee:  
Come, Spring, for now from all the drip  
ping eaves  
The spear of ice has wept itself away,  
And hour by hour unfolding woodbine  
leaves  
O'er his uncertain shadow droops the  
day.  
She comes! The loosen'd rivulets run;  
The frost-bead melts upon her golden  
hair;  
Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,  
Now wraps her close, now arching leaves  
her bare  
To breaths of balmier air;

## THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

### II

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome  
 her,  
 About her glance the tits, and shriek the  
 jays,  
 Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker,  
 The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,  
 While round her brows a woodland culver  
 flits,  
 Watching her large light eyes and  
 gracious looks,  
 And in her open palm a halcyon sits  
 Patient—the secret splendour of the  
 brooks.  
 Come, Spring! She comes on waste and  
 wood,  
 On farm and field: but enter also here,  
 Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my blood,  
 And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,  
 Lodge with me all the year!

### III

Once more a downy drift against the  
 brakes,  
 Self-darken'd in the sky, descending  
 slow!  
 But gladly see I thro' the wavering flakes  
 Yon blanching apricot like snow in  
 snow.  
 These will thine eyes not brook in forest-  
 paths,  
 On their perpetual pine, nor round the  
 beech;  
 They fuse themselves to little spicy baths,  
 Solved in the tender blushes of the  
 peach;  
 They lose themselves and die  
 On that new life that gems the hawthorn  
 line;  
 Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them by,  
 And out once more in varnish'd glory  
 shine  
 Thy stars of celandine.

### IV

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven lours,  
 But in the tearful splendour of her  
 smiles  
 I see the slowly-thickening chestnut  
 towers  
 Fill out the spaces by the barren tiles.

Now past her feet the swallow circling  
 flies,  
 A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet her  
 hand;  
 Her light makes rainbows in my closing  
 eyes,  
 I hear a charm of song thro' all the  
 land.  
 Come, Spring! She comes, and Earth is  
 glad  
 To roll her North below thy deepening  
 dome,  
 But ere thy maiden birk be wholly clad,  
 And these low bushes dip their twigs in  
 foam,  
 Make all true hearths thy home.

### V

Across my garden! and the thicket stirs,  
 The fountain pulses high in sunnier jets,  
 The blackcap warbles, and the turtle  
 purrs,  
 The starling claps his tiny castanets.  
 Still round her forehead wheels the wood-  
 land dove,  
 And scatters on her throat the sparks of  
 dew,  
 The kingcup fills her footprint, and above  
 Broaden the glowing isles of vernal blue.  
 Hail ample presence of a Queen,  
 Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,  
 Whose mantle, every shade of glancing  
 green,  
 Flies back in fragrant breezes to display  
 A tunic white as May!

### VI

She whispers, 'From the South I bring  
 you balm,  
 For on a tropic mountain was I born,  
 While some dark dweller by the coco-  
 palm  
 Watch'd my far meadow zoned with  
 airy morn;  
 From under rose a muffled moan of floods;  
 I sat beneath a solitude of snow;  
 There no one came, the turf was fresh, the  
 woods  
 Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their vales  
 below.

## THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

I saw beyond their silent tops

The steaming marshes of the scarlet  
cranes,  
The slant seas leaning on the mangrove  
copse,  
And summer basking in the sultry plains  
About a land of canes;

### VII

'Then from my vapour-girdle soaring  
forth  
I scaled the buoyant highway of the  
birds,  
And drank the dews and drizzle of the  
North,  
That I might mix with men, and hear  
their words  
On pathway'd plains; for—while my hand  
exults  
Within the bloodless heart of lowly  
flowers  
To work old laws of Love to fresh results,  
Thro' manifold effect of simple powers—  
I too would teach the man  
Beyond the darker hour to see the  
bright,  
That his fresh life may close as it began,  
The still-fulfilling promise of a light  
Narrowing the bounds of night.'

### VIII

So wed thee with my soul, that I may  
mark  
The coming year's great good and  
varied ills,  
And new developments, whatever spark  
Be struck from out the clash of warring  
wills;  
Or whether, since our nature cannot rest,  
The smoke of war's volcano burst again  
From hoary deeps that belt the changeful  
West,  
Old Empires, dwellings of the kings of  
men;  
Or should those fail, that hold the helm,  
While the long day of knowledge grows  
and warms,  
And in the heart of this most ancient  
realm  
A hateful voice be utter'd, and alarms  
Sounding 'To arms! to arms!'

### IX

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn  
Who reads thy gradual process, Holy  
Spring.  
Thy leaves possess the season in their  
turn,  
And in their time thy warblers rise on  
wing.  
How surely glidest thou from March to  
May,  
And changest, breathing it, the sullen  
wind,  
Thy scope of operation, day by day,  
Larger and fuller, like the human mind!  
Thy warmth from bud to bud  
Accomplish that blind model in the  
seed  
And men have hopes, which race the rest-  
less blood,  
That after many changes may succeed  
Life, which is Life indeed.

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

### I

O YOUNG Mariner,  
You from the haven  
Under the sea-cliff,  
You that are watching  
The gray Magician  
With eyes of wonder,  
I am Merlin,  
And I am dying,  
I am Merlin  
Who follow The Gleam.

### II

Mighty the Wizard  
Who found me at sunrise  
Sleeping, and woke me  
And learn'd me Magic!  
Great the Master,  
And sweet the Magic,  
When over the valley,  
In early summers,  
Over the mountain,  
On human faces,  
And all around me,  
Moving to melody,  
Floated The Gleam.

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

### III

Once at the croak of a Raven who crost it,  
A barbarous people,  
Blind to the magic,  
And deaf to the melody,  
Snarl'd at and cursed me.  
A demon vext me,  
The light retreated,  
The landskip darken'd,  
The melody deaden'd,  
The Master whisper'd  
'Follow The Gleam.'

### IV

Then to the melody,  
Over a wilderness  
Gliding, and glancing at  
Elf of the woodland,  
Gnome of the cavern,  
Griffin and Giant,  
And dancing of Fairies  
In desolate hollows,  
And wraiths of the mountain,  
And rolling of dragons  
By warble of water,  
Or cataract music  
Of falling torrents,  
Flitted The Gleam.

### V

Down from the mountain  
And over the level,  
And streaming and shining on  
Silent river,  
Silvery willow,  
Pasture and plowland,  
Innocent maidens,  
Garrulous children,  
Homestead and harvest,  
Reaper and gleaner,  
And rough-ruddy faces  
Of lowly labour,  
Slided The Gleam—

### VI

Then, with a melody  
Stronger and statelier,  
Led me at length  
To the city and palace  
Of Arthur the king;

Touch'd at the golden  
Cross of the churches,  
Flash'd on the Tournament,  
Flicker'd and bicker'd  
From helmet to helmet,  
And last on the forehead  
Of Arthur the blameless  
Rested The Gleam.

### VII

Clouds and darkness  
Closed upon Camelot;  
Arthur had vanish'd  
I knew not whither,  
The king who loved me,  
And cannot die;  
For out of the darkness  
Silent and slowly  
The Gleam, that had waned to a wintry  
glimmer  
On icy fallow  
And faded forest,  
Drew to the valley  
Named of the shadow,  
And slowly brightening  
Out of the glimmer,  
And slowly moving again to a melody  
Yearningly tender,  
Fell on the shadow,  
No longer a shadow,  
But clothed with The Gleam.

### VIII

And broader and brighter  
The Gleam flying onward,  
Wed to the melody,  
Sang thro' the world;  
And slower and fainter,  
Old and weary,  
But eager to follow,  
I saw, whenever  
In passing it glanced upon  
Hamlet or city,  
That under the Crosses  
The dead man's garden,  
The mortal hillock,  
Would break into blossom;  
And so to the land's  
Last limit I came—  
And can no longer,  
But die rejoicing,

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

For thro' the Magic  
Of Him the Mighty,  
Who taught me in childhood,  
There on the border  
Of boundless Ocean,  
And all but in Heaven  
Hovers The Gleam.

### IX

Not of the sunlight,  
Not of the moonlight,  
Not of the starlight!  
O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions,  
Launch your vessel,  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow The Gleam.

### ROMNEY'S REMORSE

'I read Hayley's *Life of Romney* the other day—Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter; but his ideal was not high nor fixed. How touching is the close of his life! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that "marriage spoilt an artist" almost immediately left his wife in the North and scarce saw her till the end of his life; when old, nearly mad and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. 'This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures! even as a matter of Art, I am sure.' (*Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald*, vol. i.)

'BEAT, little heart—I give you this and this'

Who are you? What! the Lady Hamilton?

Good, I am never weary painting you.  
To sit once more? Cassandra, Hebe, Joan,  
Or spinning at your wheel beside the vine—

Bacchante, what you will; and if I fail  
To conjure and concentrate into form  
And colour all you are, the fault is less  
In me than Art. What Artist ever yet  
Could make pure light live on the canvas?  
Art!

Why should I so disrelish that short word?

Where am I? snow on all the hills! so  
hot,  
So fever'd! never colt would more delight  
To roll himself in meadow grass than I  
To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired? or came of your  
own will

To wait on one so broken, so forlorn?  
Have I not met you somewhere long ago?  
I am all but sure I have—in Kendal  
church—

O yes! I hired you for a season there,  
And then we parted; but you look so kind  
That you will not deny my sultry throat  
One draught of icy water. There—you spill  
The drops upon my forehead. Your hand  
shakes.

I am ashamed. I am a trouble to you,  
Could kneel for your forgiveness. Are they  
tears?

For me—they do me too much grace—for  
me?

O Mary, Mary!

Vexing you with words!

Words only, born of fever, or the fumes  
Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,—  
words,

Wild babble. I have stumbled back again  
Into the common day, the sounder self.  
God stay me there, if only for your sake,  
The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted wife  
That ever wore a Christian marriage-ring.

My curse upon the Master's apothegm,  
That wife and children drag an Artist  
down!

This seem'd my lodestar in the Heaven of  
Art,  
And lured me from the household fire on  
earth.

To you my days have been a life-long lie,  
Grafted on half a truth; and tho' you say  
'Take comfort you have won the Painter's  
fame,'

The best in me that sees the worst in me,  
And groans to see it, finds no comfort  
there.

What fame? I am not Raphael, Titian  
—no

Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.  
Wrong there! The painter's fame? but  
mine, that grew

## ROMNEY'S REMORSE

Blown into glittering by the popular  
breath,  
May float awhile beneath the sun, may roll  
The rainbow hues of heaven about it—

There!

The colour'd bubble bursts above the  
abyss  
Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so?

Her sad eyes plead for my own fame with  
me  
To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen

To flame along another dreary day.  
Your hand. How bright you keep your  
marriage-ring!  
Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then

Bred this black mood? or am I conscious,  
more  
Than other Masters, of the chasm between  
Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom of Age  
And suffering cloud the height I stand  
upon  
Even from myself? stand? stood . . . no  
more.

And yet

The world would lose, if such a wife as you  
Should vanish unrecorded. Might I crave  
One favour? I am bankrupt of all claim  
On your obedience, and my strongest wish  
Falls flat before your least unwillingness.  
Still would you—if it please you—sit to  
me?

I dream'd last night of that clear summer  
noon,

When seated on a rock, and foot to foot  
With your own shadow in the placid lake,  
You claspt our infant daughter, heart to  
heart.  
I had been among the hills, and brought  
you down  
A length of staghorn-moss, and this you  
twined  
About her cap. I see the picture yet,  
Mother and child. A sound from far away,  
No louder than a bee among the flowers,  
A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep.

You still'd it for the moment with a song  
Which often echo'd in me, while I stood  
Before the great Madonna-masterpieces  
Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.

Mary, my crayons! if I can, I will.

You should have been—I might have made  
you once,

Had I but known you as I know you now—  
The true Alcestis of the time. Your song—  
Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof  
That I—even I—at times remember'd *you*.

'Beat upon mine, little heart! beat, beat!

Beat upon mine! you are mine, my  
sweet!  
All mine from your pretty blue eyes to  
your feet,

My sweet.'

Less profile! turn to me—three-quarter  
face.

'Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my  
bliss!

For I give you this, and I give you this!  
And I blind your pretty blue eyes with  
a kiss!

Sleep!'

Too early blinded by the kiss of death—  
'Father and Mother will watch you  
grow'—

You watch'd not I, she did not grow, she  
died.

'Father and Mother will watch you grow,  
And gather the roses whenever they  
blow,  
And find the white heather wherever  
you go,

My sweet.'

Ah, my white heather only blooms in  
heaven

With Milton's amaranth. There, there,  
there! a child

Had shamed me at it—Down, you idle  
tools,

Stamp into dust—tremulous, all awry,  
Blur'd like a landskip in a ruffled pool,—  
Not one stroke firm. This Art, that harlot-  
like

Seduced me from you, leaves me harlot-  
like,



## ROMNEY'S REMORSE

Who love her still, and whimper, impotent  
 To win her back before I die—and then—  
 Then, in the loud world's bastard judgment-day,  
 One truth will damn me with the mindless mob,  
 Who feel no touch of my temptation, more  
 Than all the myriad lies, that blacken round  
 The corpse of every man that gains a name;  
 'This model husband, this fine Artist'! Fool,  
 What matters? Six foot deep of burial mould  
 Will dull their comments! Ay, but when the shout  
 Of His descending peals from Heaven, and throbs  
 Thro' earth, and all her graves, if *He*  
 should ask  
 'Why left you wife and children? for my sake,  
 According to my word?' and I replied  
 'Nay, Lord, for *Art*,' why, that would sound so mean  
 That all the dead, who wait the doom of Hell  
 For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,  
 Wife-murders,—nay, the ruthless Mussulman  
 Who flings his bowstrung Harem in the sea,  
 Would turn, and glare at me, and point and jeer,  
 And gibber at the worm, who, living, made  
 The wife of wives a widow-bride, and lost  
 Salvation for a sketch.

I am wild again!

The coals of fire you heap upon my head  
 Have crazed me. Someone knocking there without?  
 No! Will my Indian brother come? to find  
 Me or my coffin? Should I know the man?  
 This worn-out Reason dying in her house  
 May leave the windows blinded, and if so,  
 Bid him farewell for me, and tell him—

Hope!

I hear a death-bed Angel whisper 'Hope.'  
 'The miserable have no medicine  
 But only Hope!' He said it . . . in the play.  
 His crime was of the senses; of the mind  
 Mine; worse, cold, calculated.

Tell my son—

O let me lean my head upon your breast,  
 'Beat little heart' on this fool brain of mine.  
 I once had friends—and many—none like you.  
 I love you more than when we married.  
 Hope!  
 O yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,  
 Human forgiveness touches heaven, and thence—  
 For you forgive me, you are sure of that—  
 Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven.

## PARNASSUS

Exegi monumentum . . .  
 Quod non . . .  
 Possit diruere . . .  
 . . . innumerabilis  
 Annorum series et fuga temporum.—HORACE.

### I

WHAT be those crown'd forms high over  
 the sacred fountain?  
 Bards, that the mighty Muses have raised  
 to the heights of the mountain,  
 And over the flight of the Ages! O Goddesses,  
 help me up thither!  
 Lightning may shrivel the laurel of Cæsar,  
 but mine would not wither.  
 Steep is the mountain, but you, you will  
 help me to overcome it,  
 And stand with my head in the zenith, and  
 roll my voice from the summit,  
 Sounding for ever and ever thro' Earth  
 and her listening nations,  
 And mixt with the great Sphere-music of  
 stars and of constellations.

### II

What be those two shapes high over the  
 sacred fountain,  
 Taller than all the Muses, and huger than  
 all the mountain?  
 On those two known peaks they stand ever  
 spreading and heightening;  
 Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted by  
 more than lightning!  
 Look, in their deep double shadow the  
 crown'd ones all disappearing!  
 Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope  
 for a deathless hearing!

## PARNASSUS

'Sounding for ever and ever?' pass on! the  
sight confuses—  
These are Astronomy and Geology, terrible  
Muses!

### III

If the lips were touch'd with fire from off  
a pure Pierian altar,  
Tho' their music here be mortal need the  
singer greatly care?  
Other songs for other worlds! the fire  
within him would not falter;  
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here  
is Homer there.

### BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

THE Lord let the house of a brute to the  
soul of a man,  
And the man said 'Am I your debtor?'  
And the Lord—'Not yet: but make it as  
clean as you can,  
And then I will let you a better.'

### I

If my body come from brutes, my soul  
uncertain, or a fable,  
Why not bask amid the senses while the  
sun of morning shines,  
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds,  
and in my stable,  
Youth and Health, and birth and wealth,  
and choice of women and of wines?

### II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old  
Age, save breaking my bones on the  
rack?  
Would I had past in the morning that  
looks so bright from afar!

### OLD AGE

Done for thee? starved the wild beast that  
was linkt with thee eighty years back.  
Less weight now for the ladder-of-  
heaven that hangs on a star.

### I

If my body come from brutes, tho' some-  
what finer than their own,  
I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall  
the royal voice be mute?

No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag  
me from the throne,  
Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and rule  
thy Province of the brute.

### II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and I  
gaze at a field in the Past,  
Where I sank with the body at times in  
the sloughs of a low desire,  
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the  
Man is quiet at last  
As he stands on the heights of his life  
with a glimpse of a height that is  
higher.

### FAR—FAR—AWAY

#### (FOR MUSIC)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the fields he  
knew  
As where earth's green stole into heaven's  
own hue,  
Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native  
dells?  
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells  
Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain  
or joy,  
Thro' those three words would haunt him  
when a boy,  
Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath  
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of  
death  
Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of  
Birth,  
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,  
Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no words  
could give?  
O dying words, can Music make you live  
Far—far—away?

## POLITICS

### POLITICS

WE move, the wheel must always move,  
Nor always on the plain,  
And if we move to such a goal  
As Wisdom hopes to gain,  
Then you that drive, and know your Craft,  
Will firmly hold the rein,  
Nor lend an ear to random cries,  
Or you may drive in vain,  
For some cry 'Quick' and some cry 'Slow,'  
But, while the hills remain,  
Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the whip,  
Down hill 'Too-quick,' the chain.

### BEAUTIFUL CITY

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater of  
European confusion,  
O you with your passionate shriek for the  
rights of an equal humanity,  
How often your Re-volution has proven  
but E-volution  
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides of a  
civic insanity!

### THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,  
When I was in my June, you in your  
May,  
Two words, 'My Rose' set all your face  
aglow,  
And now that I am white, and you are  
gray,  
That blush of fifty years ago, my dear,  
Blooms in the Past, but close to me  
to-day  
As this red rose, which on our terrace here  
Glow in the blue of fifty miles away.

### THE PLAY

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd  
with woe  
You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.  
And yet be patient. Our Playwright may  
show  
In some fifth Act what this wild Drama  
means.

### ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN EFFEMINATE MANNER

WHILE man and woman still are incom-  
plete,  
I prize that soul where man and woman  
meet,  
Which types all Nature's male and female  
plan,  
But, friend, man-woman is not woman-  
man.

### TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN THE ENGLISH

You make our faults too gross, and thence  
maintain  
Our darker future. May your fears be vain!  
At times the small black fly upon the pane  
May seem the black ox of the distant plain.

### THE SNOWDROP

MANY, many welcomes  
February fair-maid,  
Ever as of old time,  
Solitary firstling,  
Coming in the cold time,  
Prophet of the gay time,  
Prophet of the May time,  
Prophet of the roses,  
Many, many welcomes  
February fair-maid!

### THE THROSTLE

'SUMMER is coming, summer is coming,  
I know it, I know it, I know it.  
Light again, leaf again, life again, love  
again,'  
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue,  
Last year you sang it as gladly.  
'New, new, new, new'! Is it then *so* new  
That you should carol so madly?

'Love again, song again, nest again, young  
again,'  
Never a prophet so crazy!  
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,  
Sec, there is hardly a daisy.

## THE THROSTLE

'Here again, here, here, here, happy  
year'!  
O warble unhidden, unbidden!  
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,  
And all the winters are hidden.

All his leaves  
Fall'n at length,  
Look, he stands,  
Trunk and bough,  
Naked strength.

## THE OAK

LIVE thy Life,  
Young and old,  
Like yon oak,  
Bright in spring,  
Living gold;

Summer-rich  
Then; and then  
Autumn-changed,  
Soberer-hued  
Gold again.

## IN MEMORIAM

W. G. WARD

FAREWELL, whose living like I shall not  
find,  
Whose Faith and Work were bells of  
full accord,  
My friend, the most unworldly of man-  
kind,  
Most generous of all Ultramontanes,  
Ward,  
How subtle at tierce and quart of mind  
with mind,  
How loyal in the following of thy Lord!

# THE DEATH OF CENONE

## AND OTHER POEMS

### JUNE BRACKEN AND HEATHER

TO E. T.

THERE on the top of the down,  
The wild heather round me and over me  
June's high blue,  
When I look'd at the bracken so bright  
and the heather so brown,  
I thought to myself I would offer this  
book to you,  
This, and my love together,  
To you that are seventy-seven,  
With a faith as clear as the heights of the  
June-blue heaven,  
And a fancy as summer-new  
As the green of the bracken amid the gloom  
of the heather.

### TO THE MASTER OF BALLIOL

I

DEAR Master in our classic town,  
You, loved by all the younger gown  
There at Balliol,  
Lay your Plato for one minute down,

II

And read a Grecian tale re-told,  
Which, cast in later Grecian mould,  
Quintus Calaber  
Somewhat lazily handled of old;

III

And on this white midwinter day—  
For have the far-off hymns of May,  
All her melodies,  
All her harmonies echo'd away?—

IV

To-day, before you turn again  
To thoughts that lift the soul of men,  
Hear my cataract's  
Downward thunder in hollow and glen,

V

Till, led by dream and vague desire,  
The woman, gliding toward the pyre,  
Find her warrior  
Stark and dark in his funeral fire.

### THE DEATH OF CENONE

CENONE sat within the cave from out  
Whose ivy-matted mouth she used to gaze  
Down at the Troad; but the goodly view  
Was now one blank, and all the serpent  
vines  
Which on the touch of heavenly feet had  
risen,  
And gliding thro' the branches over-  
bower'd  
The naked Thrice, were wither'd long ago,  
And thro' the sunless winter morning-  
mist  
In silence wept upon the flowerless earth.  
And while she stared at those dead cords  
that ran  
Dark thro' the mist, and linking tree to  
tree,  
But once were gayer than a dawning sky  
With many a pendent bell and fragrant  
star,  
Her Past became her Present, and she saw  
Him, climbing toward her with the golden  
fruit,  
Him, happy to be chosen Judge of Gods,  
Her husband in the flush of youth and  
dawn,  
Paris, himself as beauteous as a God.  
Anon from out the long ravine below,  
She heard a wailing cry, that seem'd at  
first  
Thin as the batlike shrillings of the Dead  
When driven to Hades, but, in coming  
near,  
Across the downward thunder of the brook  
Sounded 'Cenone'; and on a sudden he,  
Paris, no longer beauteous as a God,  
Struck by a poison'd arrow in the fight,

## THE DEATH OF CENONE

Lame, crooked, reeling, livid, thro' the  
 mist  
 Rose, like the wraith of his dead self, and  
 moan'd  
 'Cenone, my Cenone, while we dwelt  
 Together in this valley—happy then—  
 Too happy had I died within thine arms,  
 Before the feud of Gods had marr'd our  
 peace,  
 And sunder'd each from each. I am dying  
 now  
 Pierced by a poison'd dart. Save me. Thou  
 knowest,  
 Taught by some God, whatever herb or  
 balm  
 May clear the blood from poison, and thy  
 fame  
 Is blown thro' all the Troad, and to thee  
 The shepherd brings his adder-bitten  
 lamb,  
 The wounded warrior climbs from Troy  
 to thee.  
 My life and death are in thy hand. The  
 Gods  
 Avenge on stony hearts a fruitless prayer  
 For pity. Let me owe my life to thee.  
 I wrought thee bitter wrong, but thou  
 forgive,  
 Forget it. Man is but the slave of Fate.  
 Cenone, by thy love which once was mine,  
 Help, heal me. I am poison'd to the heart.'  
 'And I to mine' she said 'Adulterer,  
 Go back to thine adulteress and die!'  
 He groan'd, he turn'd, and in the mist  
 at once  
 Became a shadow, sank and disappear'd,  
 But, ere the mountain rolls into the plain,  
 Fell headlong dead; and of the shepherds  
 one  
 Their oldest, and the same who first had  
 found  
 Paris, a naked babe, among the woods  
 Of Ida, following lighted on him there,  
 And shouted, and the shepherds heard and  
 came.  
 One raised the Prince, one sleek'd the  
 squalid hair,  
 One kiss'd his hand, another closed his  
 eyes,  
 And then, remembering the gay playmate  
 rear'd

Among them, and forgetful of the man,  
 Whose crime had half unpeopled Ilion,  
 these  
 All that day long labour'd, hewing the  
 pines,  
 And built their shepherd-prince a funeral  
 pile;  
 And, while the star of eve was drawing  
 light  
 From the dead sun, kindled the pyre, and  
 all  
 Stood round it, hush'd, or calling on his  
 name.  
 But when the white fog vanish'd like a  
 ghost  
 Before the day, and every topmost pine  
 Spired into bluest heaven, still in her  
 cave,  
 Amazed, and ever seeming stared upon  
 By ghastlier than the Gorgon head, a  
 face,—  
 His face deform'd by lurid blotch and  
 blain—  
 There, like a creature frozen to the heart  
 Beyond all hope of warmth, Cenone sat  
 Not moving, till in front of that ravine  
 Which drowsed in gloom, self-darken'd  
 from the west,  
 The sunset blazed along the wall of Troy.  
 Then her head sank, she slept, and thro'  
 her dream  
 A ghostly murmur floated, 'Come to me,  
 Cenone! I can wrong thee now no more,  
 Cenone, my Cenone,' and the dream  
 Wail'd in her, when she woke beneath the  
 stars.  
 What star could burn so low? not Ilion  
 yet.  
 What light was there? She rose and slowly  
 down,  
 By the long torrent's ever-deepen'd roar,  
 Paced, following, as in trance, the silent  
 cry.  
 She waked a bird of prey that scream'd  
 and past;  
 She roused a snake that hissing writhed  
 away;  
 A panther sprang across her path, she  
 heard  
 The shriek of some lost life among the  
 pines,

## THE DEATH OF ÆNONE

But when she gain'd the broader vale, and  
saw

The ring of faces reddened by the flames  
Enfolding that dark body which had lain  
Of old in her embrace, paused—and then  
ask'd

Falteringly, 'Who lies on yonder pyre?'  
But every man was mute for reverence.  
Then moving quickly forward till the heat  
Smote on her brow, she lifted up a voice  
Of shrill command, 'Who burns upon the  
pyre?'

Whereon their oldest and their boldest  
said,

'He, whom thou wouldst not heal' and all  
at once

The morning light of happy marriage broke  
Thro' all the clouded years of widowhood,  
And muffling up her comely head, and  
crying

'Husband!' she leapt upon the funeral pile,  
And mixt herself with *him* and past in fire.

### ST. TELEMACHUS

HAD the fierce ashes of some fiery peak  
Been hurl'd so high they ranged about the  
globe?

For day by day, thro' many a blood-red  
eve,

In that four-hundredth summer after  
Christ,

The wrathful sunset glared against a cross  
Rear'd on the tumbled ruins of an old fane  
No longer sacred to the Sun, and flamed  
On one huge slope beyond, where in his  
cave

The man, whose pious hand had built the  
cross,

A man who never changed a word with  
men,

Fasted and pray'd, Telemachus the Saint.

Eve after eve that haggard anchorite  
Would haunt the desolated fane, and there  
Gaze at the ruin, often mutter low  
'Vicisti Galilæe'; louder again,  
Spurning a shatter'd fragment of the God,  
'Vicisti Galilæe!' but—when now  
Bathed in that lurid crimson—ask'd 'Is  
earth

On fire to the West? or is the Demon-god

Wroth at his fall?' and heard an answer  
'Wake

Thou deedless dreamer, lazying out a life  
Of self-suppression, not of selfless love.'  
And once a flight of shadowy fighters crost  
The disk, and once, he thought, a shape  
with wings

Came sweeping by him, and pointed to the  
West,

And at his ear he heard a whisper 'Rome'  
And in his heart he cried 'The call of God!'  
And call'd arose, and, slowly plunging  
down

Thro' that disastrous glory, set his face  
By waste and field and town of alien tongue,  
Following a hundred sunsets, and the  
sphere

Of westward-wheeling stars; and every  
dawn

Struck from him his own shadow on to  
Rome.

Foot-sore, way-worn, at length he  
touch'd his goal,

The Christian city. All her splendour fail'd  
To lure those eyes that only yearn'd to see,  
Flecting betwixt her column'd palace-  
walls,

The shape with wings. Anon there past a  
crowd

With shameless laughter, Pagan oath, and  
jest,

Hard Romans brawling of their monstrous  
games;

He, all but deaf thro' age and weariness,  
And muttering to himself 'The call of  
God'

And borne along by that full stream of  
men,

Like some old wreck on some indrawing  
sea,

Gain'd their huge Colosseum. The caged  
beast

Yell'd, as he yell'd of yore for Christian  
blood.

Three slaves were trailing a dead lion away,  
One, a dead man. He stumbled in, and sat  
Blinded; but when the momentary gloom,  
Made by the noonday blaze without, had  
left

His aged eyes, he raised them, and beheld  
A blood-red awning waver overhead,

## ST. TELEMACHUS

The dust send up a steam of human blood,  
The gladiators moving toward their fight,  
And eighty thousand Christian faces watch  
Man murder man. A sudden strength from  
heaven,

As some great shock may wake a palsied  
limb,

Turn'd him again to boy, for up he sprang,  
And glided lightly down the stairs, and o'er  
The barrier that divided beast from man  
Slip, and ran on, and flung himself  
between

The gladiatorial swords, and call'd 'For-  
bear

In the great name of Him who died for  
men,

Christ Jesus!' For one moment afterward  
A silence follow'd as of death, and then  
A hiss as from a wilderness of snakes,  
Then one deep roar as of a breaking sea,  
And then a shower of stones that stoned  
him dead,

And then once more a silence as of death.  
His dream became a deed that woke the  
world,

For while the frantic rabble in half-amaze  
Stared at him dead, thro' all the nobler  
hearts

In that vast Oval ran a shudder of shame.  
The Baths, the Forum gabbled of his death,  
And preachers linger'd o'er his dying  
words,

Which would not die, but echo'd on to  
reach

Honorius, till he heard them, and decreed  
That Rome no more should wallow in this  
old lust

Of Paganism, and make her festal hour  
Dark with the blood of man who murder'd  
man.

[For Honorius, who succeeded to the sove-  
reignty over Europe, suppress the gladiatorial  
combats practised of old in Rome, on occasion  
of the following event. There was one Tele-  
machus, embracing the ascetic mode of life,  
who setting out from the East and arriving at  
Rome for this very purpose, while that accursed  
spectacle was being performed, entered himself  
the circus, and descending into the arena,  
attempted to hold back those who wielded  
deadly weapons against each other. The spec-  
tators of the murderous fray, possess with the  
drunken glee of the demon who delights in such

bloodshed, stoned to death the preacher of  
peace. The admirable Emperor learning this  
put a stop to that evil exhibition.—Theodoret's  
*Ecclesiastical History*.]

## AKBAR'S DREAM

AN INSCRIPTION BY ABUL FAZL FOR A TEMPLE  
IN KASHMIR (Blochmann xxxii)

O GOD in every temple I see people that see  
thee, and in every language I hear spoken,  
people praise thee.

Polytheism and Islâm feel after thee.

Each religion says, 'Thou art one, without  
equal'

If it be a mosque people murmur the holy  
prayer, and if it be a Christian Church, people  
ring the bell from love to Thee.

Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister,  
and sometimes the mosque.

But it is thou whom I search from temple to  
temple.

Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy  
or orthodoxy; for neither of them stands behind  
the screen of thy truth.

Heresy to the heretic, and religion to the  
orthodox,

But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the  
heart of the perfume seller.

AKBAR and ABUL FAZL before the palace at  
*Fatehpur-Sikri at night*

'LIGHT of the nations' ask'd his Chronicler  
Of Akbar 'what has darken'd thee to-  
night?'

Then, after one quick glance upon the  
stars,

And turning slowly toward him, Akbar  
said

'The shadow of a dream—an idle one  
It may be. Still I raised my heart to heaven,  
I pray'd against the dream. To pray, to  
do—

To pray, to do according to the prayer,  
Are, both, to worship Alla, but the prayers,  
That have no successor in deed, are faint  
And pale in Alla's eyes, fair mothers they  
Dying in childbirth of dead sons. I vow'd  
Whate'er my dreams, I still would do the  
right

Thro' all the vast dominion which a sword,  
That only conquers men to conquer peace,  
Has won me. Alla be my guide!

But come,  
My noble friend, my faithful counsellor,



## AKBAR'S DREAM

Sit by my side. While thou art one with me,  
I seem no longer like a lonely man  
In the king's garden, gathering here and  
there

From each fair plant the blossom choicest-  
grown

To wreath a crown not only for the king  
But in due time for every Mussulmân,  
Brahmin, and Buddhist, Christian, and  
Parsee,

Thro' all the warring world of Hindustan.

Well spake thy brother in his hymn to  
heaven

"Thy glory baffles wisdom. All the tracks  
Of science making toward Thy Perfectness  
Are blinding desert sand; we scarce can  
spell

The Alif of Thine alphabet of Love."

He knows Himself, men nor themselves  
nor Him,

For every splinter'd fraction of a sect  
Will clamour "I am on the Perfect Way,  
All else is to perdition."

Shall the rose

Cry to the lotus "No flower thou"? the  
palm

Call to the cypress "I alone am fair"?

The mango spurn the melon at his foot?

"Mine is the one fruit Alla made for man."

Look how the living pulse of Alla beats  
Thro' all His world. If every single star  
Should shriek its claim "I only am in  
heaven"

Why that were such sphere-music as the  
Greek

Had hardly dream'd of. There is light  
in all,

And light, with more or less of shade, in all  
Man-modes of worship; but our Ulama,  
Who "sitting on green sofas contemplate  
The torment of the damn'd" already, these  
Are like wild brutes new-caged—the  
narrower

The cage, the more their fury. Me they  
front

With sullen brows. What wonder! I  
decreed

That even the dog was clean, that men  
may taste

Swine-flesh, drink wine; they know too  
that when'er

In our free Hall, where each philosophy  
And mood of faith may hold its own, they  
blurt

Their furious formalisms, I but hear  
The clash of tides that meet in narrow  
seas,—

Not the Great Voice not the true Deep.

To drive

A people from their ancient fold of Faith,  
And wall them up perforce in mine—  
unwise,

Unkinglike;—and the morning of my reign  
Was reddened by that cloud of shame  
when I . . .

I hate the rancour of their castes and  
creeds,

I let men worship as they will, I reap  
No revenue from the field of unbelief.

I cull from every faith and race the best  
And bravest soul for counsellor and friend.

I loathe the very name of infidel.

I stagger at the Korân and the sword.

I shudder at the Christian and the stake;

Yet "Alla," says their sacred book, "is  
Love,"

And when the Goan Padre quoting Him,  
Issa Ben Mariam, his own prophet, cried

"Love one another little ones" and "bless"  
Whom? even "your persecutors"! there

methought

The cloud was rifted by a purer gleam  
Than glances from the sun of our Islâm.

And thou rememberest what a fury  
shook

Those pillars of a moulder'd faith, when  
he,

That other, prophet of their fall, pro-  
claimed

His Master as "the Sun of Righteousness,"

Yea, Alla here on earth, who caught and  
held

His people by the bridle-rein of Truth.

What art thou saying? "And was not  
Alla call'd

In old Irân the Sun of Love? and Love

The net of truth?"

A voice from old Irân!

Nay, but I know it—*his*, the hoary Sheik,  
On whom the women shrieking "Atheist"  
flung

Filth from the roof, the mystic melodist

## AKBAR'S DREAM

Who all but lost himself in Alla, him  
Abû Saïd——

—a sun but dimly seen

Here, till the mortal morning mists of earth  
Fade in the noon of heaven, when creed  
and race  
Shall bear false witness, each of each, no  
more,  
But find their limits by that larger light,  
And overstep them, moving easily  
Thro' after-ages in the love of Truth,  
The truth of Love.

The sun, the sun! they rail

At me the Zoroastrian. Let the Sun,  
Who heats our earth to yield us grain and  
fruit,  
And laughs upon thy field as well as mine,  
And warms the blood of Shiah and Sunnee,  
Symbol the Eternal! Yea and may not  
kings  
Express Him also by their warmth of love  
For all they rule—by equal law for all?  
By deeds a light to men?

But no such light

Glanced from our Presence on the face of  
one,  
Who breaking in upon us yestermorn,  
With all the Hells a-glare in either eye,  
Yell'd "hast *thou* brought us down a new  
Korân  
From heaven? art *thou* the Prophet? canst  
*thou* work  
Miracles?" and the wild horse, anger,  
plunged  
To fling me, and fail'd. Miracles! no, not I  
Nor he, nor any. I can but lift the torch  
Of Reason in the dusky cave of Life,  
And gaze on this great miracle, the World,  
Adoring That who made, and makes,  
and is,  
And is not, what I gaze on—all else Form,  
Ritual, varying with the tribes of men.  
Ay but, my friend, thou knowest I hold  
that forms

Are needful: only let the hand that rules,  
With politic care, with utter gentleness,  
Mould them for all his people.

And what are forms?

Fair garments, plain or rich, and fitting  
close  
Or flying looselier, warm'd but by the heart

Within them, moved but by the living  
limb,  
And cast aside, when old, for newer,—  
Forms!

The Spiritual in Nature's market-place—  
The silent Alphabet-of-heaven-in-man  
Made vocal—banners blazoning a Power  
That is not seen and rules from far away—  
A silken cord let down from Paradise,  
When fine Philosophies would fail, to draw  
The crowd from wallowing in the mire of  
earth,

And all the more, when these behold their  
Lord,  
Who shaped the forms, obey them, and  
himself

Here on this bank in *some* way live the life  
Beyond the bridge, and serve that Infinite  
Within us, as without, that All-in-all,  
And over all, the never-changing One  
And ever-changing Many, in praise of  
Whom

The Christian bell, the cry from off the  
mosque,  
And vaguer voices of Polytheism  
Make but one music, harmonising "Pray."

There westward—under yon slow-fall-  
ing star,

The Christians own a Spiritual Head;  
And following thy true counsel, by thine  
aid,

Myself am such in our Islâm, for no  
Mirage of glory, but for power to fuse  
My myriads into union under one;  
To hunt the tiger of oppression out  
From Office; and to spread the Divine  
Faith

Like calming oil on all their stormy creeds,  
And fill the hollows between wave and  
wave;

To nurse my children on the milk of Truth,  
And alchemise old hates into the gold  
Of Love, and make it current; and beat  
back

The menacing poison of intolerant priests,  
Those cobras ever setting up their hoods—  
One Alla! one Kalifa!

Still—at times

A doubt, a fear,—and yester afternoon  
I dream'd,—thou knowest how deep a well  
of love

## AKBAR'S DREAM

My heart is for my son, Saleem, mine heir,—

And yet so wild and wayward that my dream—

He glares askance at thee as one of those  
Who mix the wines of heresy in the cup  
Of counsel—so—I pray thee—

Well, I dream'd

That stone by stone I rear'd a sacred fane,  
A temple, neither Pagod, Mosque, nor Church,

But loftier, simpler, always open-door'd  
To every breath from heaven, and Truth  
and Peace

And Love and Justice came and dwelt  
therein;

But while we stood rejoicing, I and thou,  
I heard a mocking laugh "the new Korân!"

And on the sudden, and with a cry  
"Saleem"

Thou, thou—I saw thee fall before me, and  
then

Me too the black-wing'd Azrael overcame,  
But Death had ears and eyes; I watch'd  
my son,

And those that follow'd, loosen, stone  
from stone,

All my fair work; and from the ruin arose  
The shriek and curse of trampled millions,  
even

As in the time before; but while I groan'd,  
From out the sunset pour'd an alien race,  
Who fitted stone to stone again, and Truth,  
Peace, Love and Justice came and dwelt  
therein,

Nor in the field without were seen or heard  
Fires of Sûttee, nor wail of baby-wife,  
Or Indian widow; and in sleep I said  
"All praise to Alla by whatever hands  
My mission be accomplish'd!" but we hear  
Music: our palace is awake, and morn  
Has lifted the dark eyelash of the Night  
From off the rosy cheek of waking Day.  
Our hymn to the sun. They sing it. Let  
us go.'

### HYMN

#### I

Once again thou flames't heavenward, once  
again we see thee rise.

Every morning is thy birthday gladdening  
human hearts and eyes.

Every morning here we greet it, bowing  
lowly down before thee,

Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless in  
thine ever-changing skies.

#### II

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing  
light from clime to clime,

Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee  
monarch in their woodland rhyme.

Warble bird, and open flower, and, men,  
below the dome of azure

Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the  
flame that measures Time!

### NOTES TO AKBAR'S DREAM

The great Mogul Emperor Akbar was born October 14, 1542, and died 1605. At 13 he succeeded his father Humayun; at 18 he himself assumed the sole charge of government. He subdued and ruled over fifteen large provinces; his empire included all India north of the Vindhya Mountains—in the south of India he was not so successful. His tolerance of religions and his abhorrence of religious persecution put our Tudors to shame. He invented a new eclectic religion by which he hoped to unite all creeds, castes and peoples: and his legislation was remarkable for vigour, justice and humanity.

'*Thy glory baffles wisdom.*' The Emperor quotes from a hymn to the Deity by Faizi, brother of Abul Fazl, Akbar's chief friend and minister, who wrote the *Ain i Akbari* (Annals of Akbar). His influence on his age was immense. It may be that he and his brother Faizi led Akbar's mind away from Islâm and the Prophet—this charge is brought against him by every Muhammadan writer; but Abul Fazl also led his sovereign to a true appreciation of his duties, and from the moment that he entered Court, the problem of successfully ruling over mixed races, which Islâm in few other countries had to solve, was carefully considered, and the policy of toleration was the result (Blochmann xxix.).

*Abul Fazl* thus gives an account of himself 'The advice of my Father with difficulty kept me back from acts of folly; my mind had no rest and my heart felt itself drawn to the sages of Mongolia or to the hermits on Lebanon. I longed for interviews with the Llamás of Tibet or with the padres of Portugal, and I would gladly sit with the priests of the Parsis and the

## AKBAR'S DREAM

learned of the Zendavesta. I was sick of the learned of my own land.'

He became the intimate friend and adviser of Akbar, and helped him in his tolerant system of government. Professor Blochmann writes 'Impressed with a favourable idea of the value of his Hindu subjects, he (Akbar) had resolved when pensively sitting in the evenings on the solitary stone at Futehpur-Sikri to rule with an even hand all men in his dominions; but as the extreme views of the learned and the lawyers continually urged him to persecute instead of to heal, he instituted discussions, because, believing himself to be in error, he thought it his duty as ruler to inquire.' 'These discussions took place every Thursday night in the Ibadat-khana a building at Futehpur-Sikri, erected for the purpose' (Malleison).

In these discussions Abul Fazl became a great power, and he induced the chief of the disputants to draw up a document defining the 'divine Faith' as it was called, and assigning to Akbar the rank of a Mujahid, or supreme khalifah, the vicegerent of the one true God.

Abul Fazl was finally murdered at the instigation of Akbar's son Salim, who in his Memoirs declares that it was Abul Fazl who had perverted his father's mind so that he denied the divine mission of Mahomet, and turned away his love from his son.

*Faizi.* When Akbar conquered the North-West Provinces of India, Faizi, then 20, began his life as a poet, and earned his living as a physician. He is reported to have been very generous and to have treated the poor for nothing. His fame reached Akbar's ears who commanded him to come to the camp at Chitor. Akbar was delighted with his varied knowledge and scholarship and made the poet teacher to his sons. Faizi at 33 was appointed Chief Poet (1588). He collected a fine library of 4300 MSS. and died at the age of 40 (1595) when Akbar incorporated his collection of rare books in the Imperial Library.

*The warring world of Hindostan.* Akbar's rapid conquests and the good government of his fifteen provinces with their complete military, civil and political systems make him conspicuous among the great kings of history.

*The Goan Padre.* Abul Fazl relates that 'one night the Ibadat-khana was brightened by the presence of Padre Rodolpho, who for intelligence and wisdom was unrivalled among Christian doctors. Several carping and bigoted men attacked him and this afforded an opportunity for the display of the calm judgment and justice of the assembly. These men brought forward the old received assertions, and did not attempt to arrive at truth by reasoning. Their

statements were torn to pieces, and they were nearly put to shame, when they began to attack the contradictions of the Gospel, but they could not prove their assertions. With perfect calmness, and earnest conviction of the truth he replied to their arguments.

*Abū Sa'īd.* 'Love is the net of Truth, Love is the noose of God' is a quotation from the great Sufee poet Abū Sa'īd—born A.D. 968, died at the age of 83. He is a mystical poet, and some of his expressions have been compared to our George Herbert. Of Shaikh Abū Sa'īd it is recorded that he said, 'when my affairs had reached a certain pitch I buried under the dust my books and opened a shop on my own account (i.e. began to teach with authority), and verily men represented me as that which I was not, until it came to this, that they went to the Qādhī and testified against me of unbelief—hood; and women got upon the roofs and cast unclean things upon me.' (Vide reprint from article in *National Review*, March 1891, by C. J. Pickering.)

*Aziz.* I am not aware that there is any record of such intrusion upon the king's privacy, but the expressions in the text occur in a letter sent by Akbar's foster-brother Aziz, who refused to come to court when summoned and threw up his government, and 'after writing an insolent and reproachful letter to Akbar in which he asked him if he had received a book from heaven, or if he could work miracles like Mahomet that he presumed to introduce a new religion, warned him that he was on the way to eternal perdition, and concluded with a prayer to God to bring him back into the path of salvation' (Elphinstone).

'The Koran, the Old and New Testament, and the Psalms of David are called books by way of excellence, and their followers "People of the Book"' (Elphinstone).

Akbar according to Abdel Kadir had his son Murad instructed in the Gospel, and used to make him begin his lessons 'In the name of Christ' instead of in the usual way 'In the name of God.'

*To drive*  
*A people from their ancient fold of Faith, etc.*  
Malleison says 'Thus must have happened because Akbar states it, but of the forced conversions I have found no record. This must have taken place whilst he was still a minor, and whilst the chief authority was wielded by Bairam.'

*'I reap no revenue from the field of unbelief'*  
The Hindus are fond of pilgrimages and Akbar removed a remunerative tax raised by his

## AKBAR'S DREAM

predecessors on pilgrimages. He also abolished the *fezza* or capitation tax on those who differed from the Mahomedan faith. He discouraged all *excessive* prayers, fasts and pilgrimages.

*Suttee.* Akbar decreed that every widow who showed the least desire not to be burnt on her husband's funeral pyre, should be let go free and unharmed.

*baby-wife.* He forbade marriage before the age of puberty.

*Indian widow.* Akbar ordained that remarriage was lawful.

*Music.* 'About a watch before daybreak,' says Abul Fazl, the musicians played to the king in the palace. 'His Majesty had such a knowledge of the science of music as trained musicians do not possess.'

'*The Divine Faith.*' The Divine Faith slowly passed away under the immediate successors of Akbar. An idea of what the Divine Faith was may be gathered from the inscription at the head of the poem. 'The document referred to, Abul Fazl says 'brought about excellent results (1) the Court became a gathering place of the sages and learned of all creeds; the good doctrines of all religious systems were recognized, and their defects were not allowed to obscure their good features; (2) perfect toleration or peace with all was established; and (3) the perverse and evil-minded were covered with shame on seeing the disinterested motives of His Majesty, and these stood in the pillory of disgrace.' Dated September 1579—Ragab 987 (Blochmann xiv.).

### THE BANDIT'S DEATH

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT<sup>1</sup>

O GREAT AND GALLANT SCOTT,  
TRUE GENTLEMAN, HEART, BLOOD AND BONE,  
I WOULD IT HAD BEEN MY LOT  
TO HAVE SEEN THEE, AND HEARD THEE, AND  
KNOWN.

SIR, do you see this dagger? nay, why do  
you start aside?

I was not going to stab you, tho' I *am* the  
Bandit's bride.

<sup>1</sup> I have adopted Sir Walter Scott's version of the following story as given in his last journal (Death of Il Bizarro)—but I have taken the liberty of making some slight alterations.

You have set a price on his head: I may  
claim it without a lie.

What have I here in the cloth? I will show  
it you by-and-by.

Sir, I was once a wife. I had one brief  
summer of bliss.

But the Bandit had woo'd me in vain, and  
he stabb'd my Piero with this.

And he dragg'd me up there to his cave in  
the mountain, and there one day  
He had left his dagger behind him. I found  
it. I hid it away.

For he reek'd with the blood of Piero; his  
kisses were red with his crime,  
And I cried to the Saints to avenge me.  
They heard, they bided their time.

In a while I bore him a son, and he loved  
to dandle the child,  
And that was a link between us; but I—to  
be reconciled?—

No, by the Mother of God, tho' I think I  
hated him less,  
And—well, if I sinn'd last night, I will find  
the Priest and confess.

Listen! we three were alone in the dell at  
the close of the day.

I was lilting a song to the babe, and it  
laugh'd like a dawn in May.

Then on a sudden we saw your soldiers  
crossing the ridge,  
And he caught my little one from me: we  
dipt down under the bridge

By the great dead pine—you know it—and  
heard as we crouch'd below,  
The clatter of arms, and voices, and men  
passing to and fro.

Black was the night when we crept away—  
not a star in the sky—  
Hush'd as the heart of the grave, till the  
little one utter'd a cry.

I whisper'd 'give it to me,' but he would  
not answer me—then  
He gript it so hard by the throat that the  
boy never cried again.

## THE BANDIT'S DEATH

We return'd to his cave—the link was  
broken—he sobb'd and he wept,  
And cursed himself; then he yawn'd, for  
the wretch *could* sleep, and he slept

Ay, till dawn stole into the cave, and a ray  
red as blood

Glanced on the strangled face—I could  
make Sleep Death, if I would—

Glared on at the murder'd son, and the  
murderous father at rest, . . .

I drove the blade that had slain my hus-  
band thrice thro' his breast.

He was loved at least by his dog: it was  
chain'd, but its horrible yell

'She has kill'd him, has kill'd him, has  
kill'd him' rang out all down thro' the  
dell,

Till I felt I could end myself too with the  
dagger—so deafen'd and dazed—

Take it, and save me from it! I fled. I was  
all but crazed

With the grief that gnaw'd at my heart, and  
the weight that dragg'd at my hand;

But thanks to the Blessed Saints that I  
came on none of his band;

And the band will be scatter'd now their  
gallant captain is dead,

For I with this dagger of his—do you  
doubt me? Here is his head!

### THE CHURCH-WARDEN AND THE CURATE

This is written in the dialect which was cur-  
rent in my youth at Spilsby and in the country  
about it.

#### I

EH? good daäy! good daäy! thaw it bean't  
not mooch of a daäy,

Nasty, casselty<sup>1</sup> weather! an' mea haäfe  
down wi' my haäy!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Casselty,' casualty, chance weather.

<sup>2</sup> 'Haäfe down wi' my haäy,' while my grass  
is only half-mown.

#### II

How be the farm gittin on? noäways.  
Gittin on i'deäid!

Why, tonups was haäfe on 'em fingers an'  
toas,<sup>1</sup> an' the mare brokken-kneead,

An' pigs didn't sell at fall,<sup>2</sup> an' wa lost wer  
Haldeny cow,

An' it beats ma to know wot she died on,  
but wool's looking oop only how.

#### III

An' soä they've maäde tha a parson, an'  
thou'll git along, niver fear,

Fur I bean church-warden mysen i' the  
parish fur fifteen year.

Well—sin ther beä chuch-wardens, ther  
mun be parsons an' all,

An' if t'one stick alongside t'uther<sup>3</sup> the  
chuch weant happen a fall.

#### IV

Fur I wur a Baptis wonst, an' ageäin the  
toithe an' the raate,

Till I fun<sup>4</sup> that it warn't not the gaainist<sup>5</sup>  
waay to the narra Gaate.

An' I can't abear 'em, I can't, fur a lot on  
'em coom'd ta-year<sup>6</sup>—

I wur down wi' the rheumatis then—to  
my pond to wesh thessens there—

Sa I sticks like the ivin<sup>7</sup> as long as I lives  
to the owd chuch now,

Fur they wesh'd their sins i' my pond, an'  
I doubts they poison'd the cow.

#### V

Ay, an' ya seed the Bishop. They says 'at  
he coom'd fra nowt—

Burn i' traade. Sa I warrants 'e niver said  
haäfe wot 'e thowt,

But 'e creapt an' 'e crawl'd along, till 'e  
feeäld 'e could howd 'is oan,

Then 'e married a great Yerl's darter, an'  
sits o' the Bishop's throän.

<sup>1</sup> 'Fingers and toes,' a disease in turnips.

<sup>2</sup> 'Fall,' autumn.

<sup>3</sup> 'If t'one stick alongside t'uther,' if the one  
hold by the other. One is pronounced like  
'own'.

<sup>4</sup> 'Fun,' found.

<sup>5</sup> 'Gaainist,' nearest.

<sup>6</sup> 'Ta-year,' this year.

<sup>7</sup> 'Ivin,' ivy.

## THE CHURCH-WARDEN AND THE CURATE

### VI

Now I'll gie tha a bit o' my mind an' tha  
weant be taakin' offence,  
Fur thou be a big scholard now wi' a  
hoonderd haacre o' sense—  
But sich an obstropulous<sup>1</sup> lad—naay, naay  
—fur I minds tha sa well,  
Tha'd niver not hopple<sup>2</sup> thy tongue, an'  
the tongue's sit afire o' Hell,  
As I says to my missis to-daay, when she  
hurl'd a plaate at the cat  
An' anoother agean my noase. Ya was niver  
sa bad as that.

### VII

But I minds when i' Howlaby beck won  
daay ya was ticklin' o' trout,  
An' keeaper 'e seed ya an roon'd, an' 'e  
beal'd<sup>3</sup> to ya 'Lad coom hout'  
An' ya stood oop naakt i' the beck, an' ya  
tell'd 'im to knaw his awn plaace  
An' ya call'd 'im a clown, ya did, an' ya  
thraw'd the fish i' 'is faace,  
An' 'e torn'd<sup>4</sup> as red as a stag-tuckey's<sup>5</sup>  
wattles, but theer an' then  
I coamb'd 'im down, fur I promised ya'd  
niver not do it agean.

### \* VIII

An' I cotch'd tha wonst i' my garden,  
when thou was a height-year-howd,<sup>6</sup>  
An' I fun thy pockets as full o' my pippins  
as iver they'd 'owd,<sup>7</sup>  
An' thou was as pearky<sup>8</sup> as owt, an' tha  
maade me as mad as mad,  
But I says to tha 'keeap 'em, an' welcome'  
fur thou was the Parson's lad.

### IX

An Parson 'e 'ears on it all, an' then taakes  
kindly to me,  
An' then I wur chose Chuch-warden an'  
coom'd to the top o' the tree,

<sup>1</sup> 'Obstropulous', obstreperous—here the Curate makes a sign of deprecation.

<sup>2</sup> 'Hopple' or 'hobble', to tie the legs of a skittish cow when she is being milked.

<sup>3</sup> 'Beal'd', bellowed.

<sup>4</sup> In such words as 'torned' (turned), 'hurled', the *r* is hardly audible.

<sup>5</sup> 'Stag-tuckey', turkey-cock.

<sup>6</sup> 'Height-year-howd', eight-year-old.

<sup>7</sup> 'Owd', hold. <sup>8</sup> 'Pearky', pert.

Fur Quoloty's hall my friends, an' they  
maakes ma a help to the poor,  
When I gits the plaate fuller o'Soondays  
nor ony chuch-warden afoor,  
Fur if iver thy feyther 'ed riled me I kep'  
mysen meeak as a lamb,  
An' saw by the Graace o' the Lord, Mr.  
Harry, I ham wot I ham.

### X

But Parson 'e *will* speäk out, saw, now 'e  
be sixty-seven,  
He'll niver swap Owlby an' Scratby fur  
owt but the Kingdom o' Heaven;  
An' thou'll be 'is Curate 'ere, but, if iver  
tha means to git 'igher,  
Tha mun tackle the sins o' the Wo'ld,<sup>1</sup> an'  
not the faults o' the Squire.  
An' I reckons tha'll light of a livin' some-  
wheers i' the Wowd<sup>2</sup> or the Fen,  
If tha cottons down to thy betters, an'  
keeaps thysen to thysen.  
But niver not speäk plaain out, if tha wants  
to git forrards a bit,  
But creeap along the hedge-bottoms, an'  
thou'll be a Bishop yit.

### XI

Naäy, but tha *mun* speäk hout to the  
Baptises here i' the town,  
Fur moast on 'em talks agean tithe, an' I'd  
like tha to preach 'em down,  
Fur *they*'ve bin a-preachin' *mca* down,  
they heve, an' I haates 'em now,  
Fur they leaved their nasty sins i' *my* pond,  
an' it poison'd the cow.

## CHARITY

### I

WHAT am I doing, you say to me, 'wasting  
the sweet summer hours'?  
Haven't you eyes? I am dressing the grave  
of a woman with flowers.

### II

For a woman ruin'd the world, as God's  
own scriptures tell,  
And a man ruin'd mine, but a woman,  
God bless her, kept me from Hell.

<sup>1</sup> 'Wo'ld', the world. Short o.

<sup>2</sup> 'Wowd', wold.

## CHARITY

### III

Love me? O yes, no doubt—how long—  
till you threw me aside!  
Dresses and laces and jewels and never a  
ring for the bride.

### IV

All very well just now to be calling me  
darling and sweet,  
And after a while would it matter so much if  
I came on the street?

### V

You when I met you first—when *he*  
brought you!—I turn'd away  
And the hard blue eyes have it still, that  
stare of a beast of prey.

### VI

*You* were his friend—you—you—when he  
promised to make me his bride,  
And you knew that he meant to betray me  
—you knew—you knew that he lied.

### VII

He married an heiress, an orphan with  
half a shire of estate,—  
I sent him a desolate wail and a curse,  
when I learn'd my fate.

### VIII

For I used to play with the knife, creep  
down to the river-shore,  
Moan to myself 'one plunge—then quiet  
for evermore.'

### IX

Would the man have a touch of remorse  
when he heard what an end was mine?  
Or brag to his fellow rakes of his conquest  
over their wine?

### X

Money—my hire—*his* money—I sent him  
back what he gave,—  
Will you move a little that way? your  
shadow falls on the grave.

### XI

Two trains clash'd: then and there he was  
crush'd in a moment and died,  
But the new-wedded wife was unharm'd,  
tho' sitting close at his side.

### XII

She found my letter upon him, my wail  
of reproach and scorn;  
I had cursed the woman he married, and  
him, and the day I was born.

### XIII

They put him aside for ever, and after a  
week—no more—  
A stranger as welcome as Satan—a widow  
came to my door:

### XIV

So I turn'd my face to the wall, I was mad,  
I was raving-wild,  
I was close on that hour of dishonour, the  
birth of a baseborn child.

### XV

O you that can flatter your victims, and  
juggle, and lie and cajole,  
Man, can you even guess at the love of a  
soul for a soul?

### XVI

I had cursed her as woman and wife, and  
in wife and woman I found  
The tenderest Christ-like creature that  
ever stept on the ground.

### XVII

She watch'd me, she nursed me, she fed  
me, she sat day and night by my bed,  
Till the joyless birthday came of a boy  
born happily dead.

### XVIII

And her name? what was it? I ask'd her.  
She said with a sudden glow  
On her patient face 'My dear, I will tell  
you before I go.'



## CHARITY

### XIX

And I when I learnt it at last, I shriek'd,  
I sprang from my seat,  
I wept, and I kiss'd her hands, I flung  
myself down at her feet,

### XX

And we pray'd together for *him*, for *him*  
who had given her the name.  
She has left me enough to live on. I need  
no wages of shame.

### XXI

She died of a fever caught when a nurse in  
a hospital ward.  
She is high in the Heaven of Heavens, she  
is face to face with her Lord,

### XXII

And He sees not her like anywhere in this  
pitiless world of ours!  
I have told you my tale. Get you gone.  
I am dressing her grave with flowers.

## KAPIOLANI

Kapiolani was a great chieftainess who lived in the Sandwich Islands at the beginning of this century. She won the cause of Christianity by openly defying the priests of the terrible goddess Pele. In spite of their threats of vengeance she ascended the volcano Mauna-I-Loa, then clambered down over a bank of cinders 400 feet high to the great lake of fire (nine miles round)—Kilauea—the home and haunt of the goddess, and flung into the boiling lava the consecrated berries which it was sacrilege for a woman to handle.

### I

WHEN from the terrors of Nature a people  
have fashion'd and worship a Spirit  
of Evil,  
Blest be the Voice of the Teacher who calls  
to them  
'Set yourselves free!'

### II

Noble the Saxon who hurl'd at his Idol a  
valorous weapon in olden England!  
Great and greater, and greatest of women,  
island heroine, Kapiolani

Clomb the mountain, and flung the berries,  
and dared the Goddess, and freed the  
people  
Of Hawa-i-ee!

### III

A people believing that Pele the Goddess  
would wallow in fiery riot and revel  
On Kilauea,  
Dance in a fountain of flame with her  
devils, or shake with her thunders and  
shatter her island,  
Rolling her anger  
Thro' blasted valley and flaring forest in  
blood-red cataracts down to the sea!

### IV

Long as the lava-light  
Glares from the lava-lake  
Dazing the starlight,  
Long as the silvery vapour in daylight  
Over the mountain  
Floats, will the glory of Kapiolani be  
mingled with either on Hawa-i-ee.

### V

What said her Priesthood?  
'Woe to this island if ever a woman should  
handle or gather the berries of Pele!  
Accurs'd were she!  
And woe to this island if ever a woman  
should climb to the dwelling of Pele  
the Goddess!  
Accurs'd were she!'

### VI

One from the Sunrise  
Dawn'd on His people, and slowly before  
him  
Vanish'd shadow-like  
Gods and Goddesses,  
None but the terrible Pele remaining as  
Kapiolani ascended her mountain,  
Baffled her priesthood,  
Broke the Taboo,  
Dipt to the crater,  
Call'd on the Power adored by the Chris-  
tian, and crying 'I dare her, let Pele  
avenge herself!'  
Into the flame-billow dash'd the berries,  
and drove the demon from Hawa-i-ee.

## THE DAWN

### THE DAWN

"You are but children."  
*Egyptian Priest to Solon*

#### I

RED of the Dawn!  
Screams of a babe in the red-hot palms of  
a Moloch of Tyre,  
Man with his brotherless dinner on man  
in the tropical wood,  
Priests in the name of the Lord passing  
souls thro' fire to the fire,  
Head-hunters and boats of Dahomey  
that float upon human blood!

#### II

Red of the Dawn!  
Godless fury of peoples, and Christless  
frolic of kings,  
And the bolt of war dashing down upon  
cities and blazing farms,  
For Babylon was a child new-born, and  
Rome was a babe in arms,  
And London and Paris and all the rest are  
as yet but in leading-strings.

#### III

Dawn not Day,  
While scandal is mouthing a bloodless  
name at *her* cannibal feast,  
And rake-ruin'd bodies and souls go  
down in a common wreck,  
And the press of a thousand cities is prized  
for it smells of the beast,  
Or easily violates virgin Truth for a coin  
or a cheque.

#### IV

Dawn not Day!  
Is it Shame, so few should have climb'd  
from the dens in the level below,  
Men, with a heart and a soul, no slaves  
of a four-footed will?  
But if twenty million of summers are  
stored in the sunlight still,  
We are far from the noon of man, there is  
time for the race to grow.

#### V

Red of the Dawn!  
Is it turning a fainter red? so be it, but  
when shall we lay

The Ghost of the Brute that is walking  
and haunting us yet, and be free?  
In a hundred, a thousand winters? Ah,  
what will *our* children be,  
The men of a hundred thousand, a million  
summers away?

### THE MAKING OF MAN

WHERE is one that, born of woman, alto-  
gether can escape  
From the lower world within him, moods  
of tiger, or of ape?  
Man as yet is being made, and ere the  
crowning Age of ages,  
Shall not æon after æon pass and touch  
him into shape?

All about him shadow still, but, while the  
races flower and fade,  
Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly  
gaining on the shade,  
Till the peoples all are one, and all their  
voices blend in choric  
Hallelujah to the Maker 'It is finish'd.  
Man is made.'

### THE DREAMER

ON a midnight in midwinter when all but  
the winds were dead,  
'The meek shall inherit the earth' was a  
Scripture that rang thro' his head,  
Till he dream'd that a Voice of the Earth  
went wailingly past him and said:

'I am losing the light of my Youth  
And the Vision that led me of old,  
And I clash with an iron Truth,  
When I make for an Age of gold,  
And I would that my race were run,  
For teeming with liars, and madmen,  
and knaves,  
And wearied of Autocrats, Anarchs, and  
Slaves,  
And darken'd with doubts of a Faith  
that saves,  
And crimson with battles, and hollow  
with graves,  
To the wail of my winds, and the moan  
of my waves  
I whirl, and I follow the Sun.'

## THE DREAMER

Was it only the wind of the Night shrilling  
out Desolation and wrong  
Thro' a dream of the dark? Yet he thought  
that he answer'd her wail with a  
song—

Moaning your losses, O Earth,  
Heart-weary and overdone!  
But all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun!

He is racing from heaven to heaven  
And less will be lost than won,  
For all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun!

The Reign of the Meek upon earth,  
O weary one, has it begun?  
But all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun!

For moans will have grown sphere-  
music  
Or ever your race be run!  
And all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun!

### MECHANOPHILUS

(In the time of the first railways.)

Now first we stand and understand,  
And sunder false from true,  
And handle boldly with the hand,  
And sec and shape and do.

Dash back that ocean with a pier,  
Strow yonder mountain flat,  
A railway there, a tunnel here,  
Mix me this Zone with that!

Bring me my horse—my horse? my wings  
That I may soar the sky,  
For Thought into the outward springs,  
I find her with the eye.

O will she, moonlike, sway the main,  
And bring or chase the storm,  
Who was a shadow in the brain,  
And is a living form?

Far as the Future vaults her skies,  
From this my vantage ground  
To those still-working energies  
I spy nor term nor bound.

As we surpass our father's skill,  
Our sons will shame our own;  
A thousand things are hidden still  
And not a hundred known.

And had some prophet spoken true  
Of all we shall achieve,  
The wonders were so wildly new,  
That no man would believe.

Meanwhile, my brothers, work, and wield  
The forces of to-day,  
And plow the Present like a field,  
And garner all you may!

You, what the cultured surface grows,  
Dispense with careful hands:  
Deep under deep for ever goes,  
Heaven over heaven expands.

### RIFLEMEN FORM!

THERE is a sound of thunder afar,  
Storm in the South that darkens the day!  
Storm of battle and thunder of war!  
Well if it do not roll our way.  
Storm, Storm, Riflemen form!  
Ready, be ready against the storm!  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Be not deaf to the sound that warns,  
Be not gull'd by a despot's plea!  
Are figs of thistles? or grapes of thorns?  
How can a despot feel with the Free?  
Form, Form, Riflemen Form!  
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Let your reforms for a moment go!  
Look to your butts, and take good aims!  
Better a rotten borough or so  
Than a rotten fleet and a city in flames!  
Storm, Storm, Riflemen form!  
Ready, be ready against the storm!  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Form, be ready to do or die!  
Form in Freedom's name and the Queen's!  
True we have got—*such* a faithful ally

## RIFLEMEN FORM!

That only the Devil can tell what he means.  
Form, Form, Riflemen Form!  
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!  
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!†

I count you kind, I hold you true;  
But what may follow who can tell?  
Give me a hand—and you—and you—  
And deem me grateful, and farewell!

## THE TOURNEY

RALPH would fight in Edith's sight,  
For Ralph was Edith's lover,  
Ralph went down like a fire to the fight,  
Struck to the left and struck to the right,  
Roll'd them over and over.  
'Gallant Sir Ralph,' said the king.

Casques were crack'd and hauberks hack'd,  
Lances snap'd in sunder,  
Rang the stroke, and sprang the blood,  
Knights were thwack'd and riven, and  
hew'd  
Like broad oaks with thunder.  
'O what an arm,' said the king.

Edith bow'd her stately head,  
Saw them lie confounded,  
Edith Montfort bow'd her head,  
Crown'd her knight's, and flush'd as red  
As poppies when she crown'd it.  
'Take her Sir Ralph,' said the king.

## THE WANDERER

THE gleam of household sunshine ends,  
And here no longer can I rest;  
Farewell!—You will not speak, my friends,  
Unfriendly of your parted guest.

O well for him that finds a friend,  
Or makes a friend where'er he come,  
And loves the world from end to end,  
And wanders on from home to home!

O happy he, and fit to live,  
On whom a happy home has power  
To make him trust his life, and give  
His fealty to the halcyon hour!

† I have been asked to republish this old poem, which was first published in *The Times*, May 9, 1859, before the Volunteer movement began.

## POETS AND CRITICS

THIS thing, that thing is the rage,  
Helter-skelter runs the age;  
Minds on this round earth of ours  
Vary like the leaves and flowers,  
Fashion'd after certain laws;  
Sing thou low or loud or sweet,  
All at all points thou canst not meet,  
Some will pass and some will pause.

What is true at last will tell:  
Few at first will place thee well;  
Some too low would have thee shine,  
Some too high—no fault of thine—  
Hold thine own, and work thy will!  
Year will graze the heel of year,  
But seldom comes the poet here,  
And the Critic's rarer still.

## A VOICE SPAKE OUT OF THE SKIES

A VOICE spake out of the skies  
To a just man and a wise—  
'The world and all within it  
Will only last a minute!'  
And a beggar began to cry  
'Food, food or I die!'  
Is it worth his while to eat,  
Or mine to give him meat,  
If the world and all within it  
Were nothing the next minute?

## DOUBT AND PRAYER

THOU' Sin too oft, when smitten by Thy  
rod,  
Rail at 'Blind Fate' with many a vain  
'Alas!'  
From sin thro' sorrow into Thee we pass  
By that same path our true forefathers  
trod;

## DOUBT AND PRAYER

And let not Reason fail me, nor the sod  
Draw from my death Thy living flower  
and grass,

Before I learn that Love, which is, and was  
My Father, and my Brother, and my God!  
Steel me with patience! soften me with  
grief!

Let blow the trumpet strongly while I pray,  
Till this embattled wall of unbelief  
My prison, not my fortress, fall away!  
Then, if Thou willest, let my day be brief,  
So Thou wilt strike Thy glory thro' the  
day.

### FAITH

#### I

DOUBT no longer that the Highest is the  
wisest and the best,  
Let not all that saddens Nature blight thy  
hope or break thy rest,  
Quail not at the fiery mountain, at the  
shipwreck, or the rolling  
Thunder, or the rending earthquake, or  
the famine, or the pest!

#### II

Neither mourn if human creeds be lower  
than the heart's desire!  
Thro' the gates that bar the distance comes  
a gleam of what is higher.  
Wait till Death has flung them open,  
when the man will make the Maker  
Dark no more with human hatreds in the  
glare of deathless fire!

### THE SILENT VOICES

WHEN the dumb Hour, clothed in black,  
Brings the Dreams about my bed,  
Call me not so often back,  
Silent Voices of the dead,  
Toward the lowland ways behind me,  
And the sunlight that is gone!  
Call me rather, silent voices,  
Forward to the starry track  
Glimmering up the heights beyond me  
On, and always on!

## GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

#### I

WILL my tiny spark of being wholly vanish  
in your deeps and heights?  
Must my day be dark by reason, O ye  
Heavens, of your boundless nights,  
Rush of Suns, and roll of systems, and  
your fiery clash of meteorites?

#### II

'Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the  
limit of thy human state,  
Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that  
Power which alone is great,  
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor  
the silent Opener of the Gate.'

## THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF CLARENCE AND AVONDALE

### To the Mourners

THE bridal garland falls upon the bier,  
The shadow of a crown, that o'er him  
hung,  
Has vanish'd in the shadow cast by Death.  
So princely, tender, truthful, reverent,  
pure—  
Mourn! That a world-wide Empire mourns  
with you,  
That all the Thrones are clouded by your  
loss,  
Were slender solace. Yet be comforted;  
For if this earth be ruled by Perfect Love,  
Then, after his brief range of blameless  
days,  
The toll of funeral in an Angel ear  
Sounds happier than the merriest marriage-bell.

The face of Death is toward the Sun of  
Life,  
His shadow darkens earth: his truer name  
Is 'Onward,' no discordance in the roll  
And march of that Eternal Harmony  
Whereto the worlds beat time, tho' faintly  
heard  
Until the great Hereafter. Mourn in hope!

## CROSSING THE BAR

### CROSSING THE BAR

SUNSET and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the  
boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and  
Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.

## APPENDIX

### OF POEMS NOT INCLUDED IN THE AUTHOR'S FINAL EDITION

#### TIMBUCTOO

[FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1829]

'Deep in that lion-haunted inland lies  
A mystic city, goal of high emprise.'

*Chapman*

I STOOD upon the Mountain which o'er-  
looks

The narrow seas, whose rapid interval  
Parts Afric from green Europe, when the  
Sun

Had fall'n below th' Atlantic, and above  
The silent heavens were blench'd with  
faery light,

Uncertain whether faëry light or cloud,  
Flowing Southward, and the chasms of  
deep, deep blue

Slumber'd unfathomable, and the stars  
Were flooded over with clear glory and  
pale.

I gazed upon the sheeny coast beyond,  
There where the Giant of old Time infix'd  
The limits of his prowess, pillars high  
Long time erased from Earth: even as the  
Sea

When weary of wild inroad buildeth up  
Huge mounds whereby to stay his yeasty  
waves.

And much I mused on legends quaint and  
old

Which whilom won the hearts of all on  
Earth

Toward their brightness, ev'n as flame  
draws air;

But had their being in the heart of man  
As air is th' life of flame: and thou wert  
then

A center'd glory-circled memory,  
Divinest Atalantis, whom the waves  
Have buried deep, and thou of later name,  
Imperial Eldorado, roof'd with gold:

Shadows to which, despite all shocks of  
Change,

All on-set of capricious Accident,  
Men clung with yearning Hope which  
would not die.

As when in some great City where the  
walls

Shake, and the streets with ghastly faces  
throng'd,

Do utter forth a subterranean voice,  
Among the inner columns far retired  
At midnight, in the lone Acropolis,  
Before the awful Genius of the place  
Kneels the pale Priestess in deep faith, the  
while

Above her head the weak lamp dips and  
winks

Unto the fearful summoning without:  
Nathless she ever clasps the marble knees,  
Bathes the cold hand with tears, and gazeth  
on

Those eyes which wear no light but that  
wherewith

Her phantasy informs them.

Where are ye,  
Thrones of the Western wave, fair Islands  
green?

Where are your moonlight halls, your  
cedarn glooms,

The blossoming abysses of your hills?

Your flowering Capes, and your gold-  
sanded bays

Blown round with happy airs of odorous  
winds?

Where are the infinite ways, which, Seraph-  
trod,

Wound thro' your great Elysian solitudes,  
Whose lowest depths were, as with visible  
love,

Fill'd with Divine effulgence, circumfused,  
Flowing between the clear and polish'd  
stems,

And ever circling round their emerald  
cones

In coronals and glories, such as gird

## TIMBUCTOO

The unfading foreheads of the Saints in  
Heaven?

For nothing visible, they say, had birth  
In that blest ground, but it was play'd  
about

With its peculiar glory. Then I raised  
My voice and cried, 'Wide Afric, doth thy  
Sun

Lighten, thy hills enfold a City as fair  
As those which starr'd the night o' the  
elder World?

Or is the rumour of thy Timbuctoo  
A dream as frail as those of ancient Time?'

A curve of whitening, flashing, ebbing  
light?

A rustling of white wings! the bright de-  
scent

Of a young Seraph! and he stood beside  
me

There on the ridge, and look'd into my face  
With his unutterable, shining orbs.

So that with hasty motion I did veil  
My vision with both hands, and saw before  
me

Such colour'd spots as dance athwart the  
eyes

Of those, that gaze upon the noonday Sun.  
Girt with a zone of flashing gold beneath  
His breast, and compass'd round about his  
brow

With triple arch of everchanging bows,  
And circled with the glory of living light  
And alternation of all hues, he stood.

'O child of man, why muse you here  
alone

Upon the Mountain, on the dreams of old  
Which fill'd the earth with passing loveli-  
ness,

Which flung strange music on the howling  
winds,

And odours rapt from remote Paradise?

Thy sense is clogg'd with dull mortality;  
Thy spirit fetter'd with the bond of clay:  
Open thine eyes and see.'

I look'd, but not

Upon his face, for it was wonderful  
With its exceeding brightness, and the  
light

Of the great Angel Mind which look'd  
from out

The starry glowing of his restless eyes.

I felt my soul grow mighty, and my spirit  
With supernatural excitation bound

Within me, and my mental eye grew large  
With such a vast circumference of thought,

That in my vanity I seem'd to stand

Upon the outward verge and bound alone  
Of full beatitude. Each failing sense,

As with a momentary flash of light  
Grew thrillingly distinct and keen. I saw

The smallest grain that dappled the dark  
Earth,

The indistinctest atom in deep air,  
The Moon's white cities, and the opal  
width

Of her small glowing lakes, her silver  
heights

Unvisited with dew of vagrant cloud,  
And the unsounded, undescended depth

Of her black hollows. The clear Galaxy  
Shorn of its hoary lustre, wonderful,

Distinct and vivid with sharp points of  
light,

Blaze within blaze, an unimagin'd depth  
And harmony of planet-girded suns

And moon-encircled planets, wheel in  
wheel,

Arch'd the wan sapphire. Nay—the hum  
of men,

Or other things talking in unknown  
tongues,

And notes of busy life in distant worlds  
Beat like a far wave on my anxious ear.

A maze of piercing, trackless, thrilling  
thoughts,

Involving and embracing each with each,  
Rapid as fire, inextricably link'd,

Expanding momentarily with every sight  
And sound which struck the palpitating

sense,  
The issue of strong impulse, hurried  
through

The riv'n rapt brain; as when in some large  
lake

From pressure of descendant crags, which  
lapse

Disjointed, crumbling from their parent  
slope



## TIMBUCTOO

At slender interval, the level calm  
Is ridg'd with restless and increasing  
spheres  
Which break upon each other, each th'  
effect  
Of separate impulse, but more fleet and  
strong  
Than its precursor, till the eye in vain  
Amid the wild unrest of swimming shade  
Dappled with hollow and alternate rise  
Of interpenetrated arc, would scan  
Definite round.

I know not if I shape  
These things with accurate similitude  
From visible objects, for but dimly now,  
Less vivid than a half-forgotten dream,  
The memory of that mental excellence  
Comes o'er me, and it may be I entwine  
The indecision of my present mind  
With its past clearness, yet it seems to me  
As even then the torrent of quick thought  
Absorbed me from the nature of itself  
With its own fleetness. Where is he, that  
borne  
Adown the sloping of an arrowy stream,  
Could link his shallop to the fleeting edge,  
And muse midway with philosophic calm  
Upon the wondrous laws, which regulate  
The fierceness of the bounding Element?

My thoughts which long had grovell'd  
in the slime  
Of this dull world, like dusky worms which  
house  
Beneath unshaken waters, but at once  
Upon some Earth-awakening day of Spring  
Do pass from gloom to glory, and aloft  
Winnow the purple, bearing on both sides  
Double display of star-lit wings, which  
burn,  
Fan-like and fibred with intensest bloom;  
Ev'n so my thoughts, erewhile so low, now felt  
Unutterable buoyancy and strength  
To bear them upward through the track-  
less fields  
Of undefin'd existence far and free.

Then first within the South methought  
I saw  
A wilderness of spires, and chrystal pile

Of rampart upon rampart, dome on dome,  
Illimitable range of battlement  
On battlement, and the Imperial height  
Of Canopy o'er-canopied.

Behind  
In diamond light upsprung the dazzling  
peaks  
Of Pyramids as far surpassing earth's  
As heaven than earth is fairer. Each aloft  
Upon his narrow'd eminence bore globes  
Of wheeling Suns, or Stars, or semblances  
Of either, showering circular abyss  
Of radiance. But the glory of the place  
Stood out a pillar'd front of burnish'd gold,  
Interminably high, if gold it were  
Or metal more etherial, and beneath  
Two doors of blinding brilliance, where no  
gaze  
Might rest, stood open, and the eye could  
scan,  
Through length of porch and valve and  
boundless hall,  
Part of a throne of fiery flame, wherefrom  
The snowy skirting of a garment hung,  
And glimpse of multitudes of multitudes  
That minister'd around it—if I saw  
These things distinctly, for my human  
brain  
Stagger'd beneath the vision, and thick night  
Came down upon my eyelids, and I fell.

With ministering hand he rais'd me up:  
Then with a mournful and ineffable smile,  
Which but to look on for a moment fill'd  
My eyes with irresistible sweet tears,  
In accents of majestic melody,  
Like a swoln river's gushings in still night  
Mingled with floating music, thus he  
spake:

'There is no mightier Spirit than I to  
sway  
The heart of man; and teach him to attain  
By shadowing forth the Unattainable;  
And step by step to scale that mighty stair  
Whose landing-place is wrapt about with  
clouds  
Of glory, of Heaven.<sup>1</sup> With earliest light of  
Spring,

<sup>1</sup> 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father in  
Heaven is perfect.'

## TIMBUCTOO

And in the glow of fallow Summertide,  
And in red Autumn when the winds are wild

With gambols, and when full-voiced  
Winter roofs

The headland with inviolate white snow,  
I play about his heart a thousand ways,  
Visit his eyes with visions, and his ears  
With harmonies of wind and wave and wood,

—Of winds which tell of waters, and of waters

Betraying the close kisses of the wind—  
And win him unto me: and few there be  
So gross of heart who have not felt and known

A higher than they see: They with dim eyes  
Behold me darkling. Lo! I have given thee  
To understand my presence, and to feel  
My fullness; I have fill'd thy lips with power.

I have rais'd thee nigher to the spheres of  
Heaven

Man's first, last home: and thou with  
ravish'd sense

I listenest the lordly music flowing from  
Th' illimitable years. I am the Spirit,  
The permeating life which courseth  
through

All th' intricate and labyrinthine veins  
Of the great vine of Fable, which, out-  
spread

With growth of shadowing leaf and clusters  
rare,

Reacheth to every corner under Heaven,  
Deep-rooted in the living soil of truth;  
So that men's hopes and fears take refuge in  
The fragrance of its complicated glooms,

And cool impleach'd twilights. Child of  
Man,

See'st thou yon river, whose translucent  
wave,

Forth issuing from the darkness, windeth  
through

The argent streets o' th' City, imaging  
The soft inversion of her tremulous Domes,  
Her gardens frequent with the stately  
Palm,

Her Pagods hung with music of sweet bells,  
Her obelisks of rang'd Chrysolite,  
Minarets and towers? Lo! how he passeth  
by,

And gulphs himself in sands, as not en-  
during

To carry through the world those waves,  
which bore

The reflex of my City in their depths.

Oh City! oh latest Throne! where I was  
rais'd

To be a mystery of loveliness

Unto all eyes, the time is well-nigh come  
When I must render up this glorious home  
To keen Discovery: soon yon brilliant  
towers

Shall darken with the waving of her wand;  
Darken, and shrink and shiver into huts,  
Black specks amid a waste of dreary sand,  
Low-built, mud-wall'd, Barbarian settle-  
ments.

How chang'd from this fair City!

Thus far the Spirit:

Then parted Heaven-ward on the wing:  
and I

Was left alone on Calpe, and the Moon  
Had fallen from the night, and all was dark!

## FROM 'POEMS, CHIEFLY LYRICAL'

[1830]

### THE 'HOW' AND THE 'WHY'

?

I AM any man's suitor,  
If any will be my tutor:  
Some say this life is pleasant,  
Some think it speedeth fast:  
In time there is no present,

In eternity no future,

In eternity no past.

We laugh, we cry, we are born, we die,  
Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why*?

The bulrush nods unto his brother,  
The wheatears whisper to each other:  
What is it they say? What do they there?

## THE 'HOW' AND THE 'WHY'

Why two and two make four? Why round  
is not square?

Why the rock stands still, and the light  
clouds fly?

Why the heavy oak groans, and the white  
willows sigh?

Why deep is not high, and high is not  
deep?

Whether we wake, or whether we sleep?

Whether we sleep, or whether we die?

How you are you? Why I am I?

Who will riddle me the *how* and the *why*?

The world is somewhat; it goes on some-  
how;

But what is the meaning of *then* and *now*?

I feel there is something; but how and  
what?

I know there is somewhat; but what and  
why?

I cannot tell if that somewhat be I.

The little bird pipeth—'why? why?'

In the summerwoods when the sun falls  
low

And the great bird sits on the opposite  
bough,

And stares in his face and shouts, 'how?  
how?'

And the black owl scuds down the mellow  
twilight,

And chaunts, 'how? how?' the whole of the  
night.

Why the life goes when the blood is spilt?

What the life is? where the soul may lie?

Why a church is with a steeple built;

And a house with a chimneypot?

Who will riddle me the how and the what?

Who will riddle me the what and the  
why?

### THE BURIAL OF LOVE

His eyes in eclipse,

Palecold his lips,

The light of his hopes unfed,

Mute his tongue,

His bow unstrung

With the tears he hath shed,

Backward drooping his graceful head,

Love is dead:

His last arrow is sped;

He hath not another dart;

Go—carry him to his dark deathbed;

Bury him in the cold cold heart—

Love is dead.

Oh, truest love! art thou forlorn,

And unrevenged? thy pleasant wiles

Forgotten, and thine innocent joy?

Shall hollowhearted apathy,

The cruellest form of perfect scorn,

With languor of most hateful smiles,

For ever write,

In the withered light

Of the tearless eye,

An epitaph that all may spy?

No! sooner she herself shall die.

For her the showers shall not fall,

Nor the round sun shine that shineth to  
all;

Her light shall into darkness change;

For her the green grass shall not spring,

Nor the rivers flow, nor the sweet birds  
sing,

Till Love have his full revenge.

### TO —

SAINTED Juliet! dearest name!

If to love be life alone,

Divinest Juliet,

I love thee, and live; and yet

Love unreturned is like the fragrant  
flame

Folding the slaughter of the sacrifice

Offered to gods upon an altarthrone;

My heart is lighted at thine eyes,

Changed into fire, and blown about with  
sighs.

### SONG

#### I

I' THE glooming light

Of middle night

So cold and white,

Worn Sorrow sits by the moaning wave;

Beside her are laid

Her mattock and spade,

## SONG

For she hath half delved her own deep  
grave.

Alone she is there:

The white clouds drizzle: her hair falls  
loose;

Her shoulders are bare;

Her tears are mixed with the beaded dews.

### II

Death standeth by;

She will not die;

With glazed eye

She looks at her grave: she cannot sleep;  
Ever alone

She maketh her moan:

She cannot speak; she can only weep,  
For she will not hope.

The thick snow falls on her flake by flake,

The dull wave mourns down the slope,

The world will not change, and her heart  
will not break.

## SONG

### I

THE lintwhite and the throstlecock

Have voices sweet and clear;

All in the bloomed May.

They from the bosmy brece

Call to the fleeting year,

If that he would them hear

And stay.

Alas! that one so beautiful

Should have so dull an ear.

### II

Fair year, fair year, thy children call,

But thou art deaf as death;

All in the bloomed May.

When thy light perisheth

That from thee issueth,

Our life evanisheth:

Oh! stay.

Alas! that lips so cruel-dumb

Should have so sweet a breath!

### III

Fair year, with brows of royal love

Thou comest, as a king.

All in the bloomed May.

Thy golden largess fling,

And longer hear us sing;

Though thou art fleet of wing,

Yet stay.

Alas! that eyes so full of light

Should be so wandering!

### IV

Thy locks are all of sunny sheen

In rings of gold yronne,<sup>1</sup>

All in the bloomed May.

We pri'thee pass not on;

If thou dost leave the sun,

Delight is with thee gone,

Oh! stay.

Thou art the fairest of thy feres,

We pri'thee pass not on.

## SONG

### I

EVERY day hath its night:

Every night its morn:

Thorough dark and bright

Winged hours are borne;

Ah! welaway!

Seasons flower and fade;

Golden calm and storm

Mingle day by day.

There is no bright form

Doth not cast a shade—

Ah! welaway!

### II

When we laugh, and our mirth

Apes the happy vein,

We're so kin to earth,

Pleasaunce fathers pain—

Ah! welaway!

Madness laugheth loud:

Laughter bringeth tears:

Eyes are worn away

Till the end of fears

Cometh in the shroud,

Ah! welaway!

### III

All is change, woe or weal;

Joy is Sorrow's brother;

Grief and gladness steal

<sup>1</sup> 'His crispèd hair in ringis was yronne.'—  
Chaucer, *Knight's Tale*.

## SONG

Symbols of each other;  
Ah! welaway!  
Larks in heaven's cope  
Sing: the culvers mourn  
All the livelong day.  
Be not all forlorn:  
Let us weep in hope—  
Ah! welaway!

### HERO TO LEANDER

Oh go not yet, my love,  
The night is dark and vast;  
The white moon is hid in her heaven  
above,  
And the waves climb high and fast.  
Oh! kiss me, kiss me, once again,  
Lest thy kiss should be the last.  
Oh kiss me ere we part;  
Grow closer to my heart.  
My heart is warmer surely than the bosom  
of the main.

Oh joy! O bliss of blisses!  
My heart of hearts art thou.  
Come bathe me with thy kisses,  
My eyelids and my brow.  
Hark how the wild rain hisses,  
And the loud sea roars below.

Thy heart beats through thy rosy limbs,  
So gladly doth it stir;  
Thine eye in drops of gladness swims.  
I have bathed thee with the pleasant  
myrrh;  
Thy locks are dripping balm;  
Thou shalt not wander hence to-night,  
I'll stay thee with my kisses.  
To-night the roaring brine  
Will rend thy golden tresses;  
The ocean with the morrow light  
Will be both blue and calm;  
And the billow will embrace thee with a  
kiss as soft as mine.

No western odours wander  
On the black and moaning sea,  
And when thou art dead, Leander,  
My soul must follow thee!  
Oh go not yet, my love,  
Thy voice is sweet and low;

The deep salt wave breaks in above  
Those marble steps below.  
The turretstairs are wet  
That lead into the sea.  
Leander! go not yet.  
The pleasant stars have set:  
Oh! go not, go not yet,  
Or I will follow thee.

### THE MYSTIC

ANGELS have talked with him, and showed  
him thrones:

Ye knew him not: he was not one of ye,  
Ye scorned him with an undiscerning  
scorn:

Ye could not read the marvel in his eye,  
The still serene abstraction: he hath felt  
The vanities of after and before;  
Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart  
The stern experiences of converse lives,  
The linked woes of many a fiery change  
Had purified, and chastened, and made  
free.

Always there stood before him, night and  
day,

Of wayward varicoloured circumstance  
The imperishable presences serene  
Colossal, without form, or sense, or sound,  
Dim shadows but unwaning presences  
Fourfaced to four corners of the sky:  
And yet again, three shadows, fronting one,  
One forward, one respectant, three but  
one;

And yet again, again and evermore,  
For the two first were not, but only seemed,  
One shadow in the midst of a great light,  
One reflex from eternity on time,  
One mighty countenance of perfect calm,  
Awful with most invariable eyes.  
For him the silent congregated hours,  
Daughters of time, divinely tall, beneath  
Severe and youthful brows, with shining  
eyes

Smiling a godlike smile (the innocent light  
Of earliest youth pierced through and  
through with all

Keen knowledges of low-embowed eld)  
Upheld, and ever hold aloft the cloud  
Which droops lowhung on either gate of  
life,

## THE MYSTIC

Both birth and death : he in the centre fixt,  
Saw far on each side through the grated  
gates

Most pale and clear and lovely distances.  
He often lying broad awake, and yet  
Remaining from the body, and apart  
In intellect and power and will, hath heard  
Time flowing in the middle of the night,  
And all things creeping to a day of doom.  
How could ye know him? Ye were yet  
within

The narrower circle; he had wellnigh  
reached

The last, which with a region of white  
flame,

Pure without heat, into a larger air  
Upburning, and an ether of black blue,  
Investeth and ingirds all other lives.

Thou hast no compt of years,  
No withered immortality,  
But a short youth sunny and free.

Carol clearly, bound along,

Soon thy joy is over,  
A summer of loud song,  
And slumbers in the clover.

What hast thou to do with evil  
In thine hour of love and revel,  
In thy heat of summerpride,  
Pushing the thick roots aside  
Of the singing flowerèd grasses,  
That brush thee with their silken tresses?  
What hast thou to do with evil,  
Shooting, singing, ever springing  
In and out the emerald glooms,  
Ever leaping, ever singing,  
Lighting on the golden blooms?

## THE GRASSHOPPER

### I

VOICE of the summerwind,  
Joy of the summerplain,  
Life of the summerhours,  
Carol clearly, bound along.  
No Tithon thou as poets feign  
(Shame fall 'em they are deaf and blind)  
But an insect lithe and strong,  
Bowing the seeded summerflowers.  
Prove their falsehood and thy quarrel,  
Vaulting on thine airy feet.  
Clap thy shielded sides and carol,  
Carol clearly, chirrup sweet.

Thou art a mailed warrior in youth and  
strength complete;

Armed cap-a-pie,  
Full fair to see;  
Unknowning fear,  
Undreading loss,

A gallant cavalier,  
*Sans peur et sans reproche,*  
In sunlight and in shadow,  
The Bayard of the meadow.

### II

I would dwell with thee,  
Merry grasshopper,  
Thou art so glad and free,  
And as light as air;  
Thou hast no sorrow or tears,

## LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGETFULNESS

ERE yet my heart was sweet Love's tomb,  
Love laboured honey busily.  
I was the hive, and Love the bee,  
My heart the honeycomb.  
One very dark and chilly night  
Pride came beneath and held a light.

The cruel vapours went through all,  
Sweet Love was withered in his cell;  
Pride took Love's sweets, and by a spell  
Did change them into gall;  
And Memory though fed by Pride  
Did wax so thin on gall,  
Awhile she scarcely lived at all.  
What marvel that she died?

## CHORUS

IN AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA,  
WRITTEN VERY EARLY

THE varied earth, the moving heaven,  
The rapid waste of roving sea,  
The fountainpregnant mountains riven  
To shapes of wildest anarchy,  
By secret fire and midnight storms  
That wander round their windy cones,  
The subtle life, the countless forms  
Of living things, the wondrous tones  
Of man and beast are full of strange  
Astonishment and boundless change.

## CHORUS

The day, the diamonded night,  
The echo, feeble child of sound,  
The heavy thunder's griding might,  
The herald lightning's starry bound,  
The vocal spring of bursting bloom,  
The naked summer's glowing birth,  
The troublous autumn's fallow gloom,  
The hoarhead winter paving earth  
With sheeny white, are full of strange  
Astonishment and boundless change.

Each sun which from the centre flings  
Grand music and redundant fire,  
The burning belts, the mighty rings,  
The murmurous planets' rolling choir,  
The globe-filled arch that, cleaving air,  
Looks in its own effulgence sleeps,  
The less comets as they glare,  
And thunder through the sapphire deeps  
In wayward strength, are full of strange  
Astonishment and boundless change.

### LOST HOPE

You cast to ground the hope which once  
was mine:  
But did the while your harsh decree de-  
plore,  
Embalming with sweet tears the vacant  
shrine,  
My heart, where Hope had been and was  
no more.

So on an oaken sprout  
A goodly acorn grew;  
But winds from heaven shook the  
acorn out,  
And filled the cup with dew.

### THE TEARS OF HEAVEN

HEAVEN weeps above the earth all night till  
morn,  
In darkness weeps as all ashamed to weep,  
Because the earth hath made her state for-  
lorn  
With self-wrought evils of unnumbered  
years,  
And doth the fruit of her dishonour reap.  
And all the day heaven gathers back her  
tears  
Into her own blue eyes so clear and deep,

And showering down the glory of lightsome  
day,  
Smiles on the earth's worn brow to win her  
if she may.

### LOVE AND SORROW

O MAIDEN, fresher than the first green leaf  
With which the fearful springtide flecks  
the lea,  
Weep not, Almeida, that I said to thee  
That thou hast half my heart, for bitter  
grief  
Doth hold the other half in sovranty.  
Thou art my heart's sun in love's crystal-  
line:  
Yet on both sides at once thou canst not  
shine:  
Thine is the bright side of my heart, and  
thine  
My heart's day, but the shadow of my  
heart,  
Issue of its own substance, my heart's  
night  
Thou canst not lighten even with *thy* light,  
All powerful in beauty as thou art.  
Almeida, if my heart were substanceless,  
Then might thy rays pass through to the  
other side,  
So swiftly, that they nowhere would abide,  
But lose themselves in utter emptiness.  
Half-light, half-shadow, let my spirit sleep;  
They never learned to love who never  
knew to weep.

### TO A LADY SLEEPING

O THOU whose fringed lids I gaze upon,  
Through whose dim brain the winged  
dreams are borne,  
Unroof the shrines of clearest vision,  
In honour of the silverflecked morn:  
Long hath the white wave of the virgin  
light  
Driven back the billow of the dreamful  
dark.  
Thou all unwittingly prolongest night,  
Though long ago listening the poised lark,  
With eyes dropt downward through the  
blue serene,  
Over heaven's parapets the angels lean.

## SONNET

### SONNET

COULD I outwear my present state of woe  
With one brief winter, and indue i' the  
spring

Hues of fresh youth, and mightily outgrow  
The wan dark coil of faded suffering—  
Forth in the pride of beauty issuing  
A sheeny snake, the light of vernal bowers,  
Moving his crest to all sweet plots of flowers  
And watered vallies where the young birds  
sing;

Could I thus hope my lost delight's renew-  
ing,

I straightly would command the tears to  
creep

From my charged lids; but inwardly I  
weep:

Some vital heat as yet my heart is wooing:  
This to itself hath drawn the frozen rain  
From my cold eyes and melted it again.

### SONNET

THOUGH Night hath climbed her peak of  
highest noon,

And bitter blasts the screaming autumn  
whirl,

All night through archways of the bridgèd  
pearl,

And portals of pure silver walks the moon.  
Walk on, my soul, nor crouch to agony,  
Turn cloud to light, and bitterness to joy,  
And dross to gold with glorious alchemy,  
Basing thy throne above the world's annoy.  
Reign thou above the storms of sorrow and  
ruth

That roar beneath; unshaken peace hath  
won thee:

So shalt thou pierce the woven glooms of  
truth;

So shall the blessing of the meek be on  
thee;

So in thine hour of dawn, the body's youth,  
An honourable eld shall come upon thee.

### SONNET

SHALL the hag Evil die with child of Good,  
Or propagate again her loathèd kind,  
Thriving the cells of the diseasèd mind,  
Hateful with hanging cheeks, a withered  
brood,

Though hourly pastured on the salient  
blood?

Oh! that the wind which bloweth cold or  
heat

Would shatter and o'erbear the brazen beat  
Of their broad vans, and in the solitude  
Of middle space confound them, and blow  
back

Their wild cries down their cavernthroats,  
and slake

With points of blastborne hail their heated  
cyme!

So their wan limbs no more might come  
between

The moon and the moon's reflex in the  
night,

Nor blot with floating shades the solar light.

### SONNET

THE pallid thunderstricken sigh for gain,  
Down an ideal stream they ever float,  
And sailing on Pactolus in a boat,  
Drown soul and sense, while wistfully they  
strain

Weak eyes upon the glistening sands that  
robe

The understream. The wise, could he be-  
hold

Cathedralled caverns of thickribbèd gold  
And branching silvers of the central globe,  
Would marvel from so beautiful a sight  
How scorn and ruin, pain and hate could  
flow:

But Hatred in a gold cave sits below;  
Pleached with her hair, in mail of argent  
light

Shot into gold, a snake her forehead clips,  
And skins the colour from her trembling  
lips.

### LOVE

#### I

THOU, from the first, unborn, undying love,  
Albeit we gaze not on thy glories near,  
Before the face of God did'st breathe and  
move,

Though night and pain and ruin and death  
reign here.

Thou foldest, like a golden atmosphere,  
The very throne of the eternal God:



## LOVE

Passing through thee the edicts of his fear  
Are mellowed into music, borne abroad  
By the loud winds, though they uprend the  
    sea,

Even from its central deeps: thine empery  
Is over all: thou wilt not brook eclipse;  
Thou goest and returnest to His lips  
Like lightning: thou dost ever brood above  
The silence of all hearts, unutterable Love.

### II

To know thee is all wisdom, and old age  
Is but to know thee: dimly we behold thee  
Athwart the veils of evil which infold thee.  
We beat upon our aching hearts in rage;  
We cry for thee; we deem the world thy  
    tomb.

As dwellers in lone planets look upon  
The mighty disk of their majestic sun,  
Hollowed in awful chasms of wheeling  
    gloom,

Making their day dim, so we gaze on thee.  
Come, thou of many crowns, white-robed  
    love,

Oh! rend the veil in twain: all men adore  
thee;  
Heaven crieth after thee; earth waiteth for  
thee:

Breathe on thy wingèd throne, and it shall  
    move

In music and in light o'er land and sea.

### III

And now—methinks I gaze upon thee now,  
As on a serpent in his agonies  
Awestricken Indians; what time laid low  
And crushing the thick fragrant reeds he  
    lies,

When the new year warmbreathed on the  
    earth,

Waiting to light him with her purple skies,  
Calls to him by the fountain to uprise.  
Already with the pangs of a new birth  
Strain the hot spheres of his convulsèd  
    eyes,

And in his writhings awful hues begin  
To wander down his able-sheeny sides,  
Like light on troubled waters: from within  
Anon he rusheth forth with merry din,  
And in him light and joy and strength  
    abides;

And from his brows a crown of living light  
Looks through the thickstemmed woods by  
    day and night.

## ENGLISH WARSONG

WHO fears to die? Who fears to die?  
Is there any here who fears to die?  
He shall find what he fears; and none shall  
    grieve

For the man who fears to die;  
But the withering scorn of the many shall  
    cleave

To the man who fears to die.

*Chorus.*—Shout for England!  
    Ho! for England!  
    George for England!  
    Merry England!  
    England for ay!

The hollow at heart shall crouch forlorn,  
He shall eat the bread of common scorn;  
It shall be steeped in the salt, salt tear,  
Shall be steeped in his own salt tear:  
Far better, far better he never were born  
Than to shame merry England here.

*Chorus.*—Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy;  
Hark! he shouteth—the ancient enemy!  
On the ridge of the hill his banners rise;  
They stream like fire in the skies;  
Hold up the Lion of England on high  
Till it dazzle and blind his eyes.

*Chorus.*—Shout for England! etc.

Come along! we alone of the earth are  
    free;  
The child in our cradles is bolder than  
    he;  
For where is the heart and strength of  
    slaves?

Oh! where is the strength of slaves?  
He is weak! we are strong; he a slave, we  
    are free;

Come along! we will dig their graves.

*Chorus.*—Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy;  
Will he dare to battle with the free?

## ENGLISH WARSONG

Spur along! spur amain! charge to the fight:  
 Charge! charge to the fight!  
 Hold up the Lion of England on high!  
 Shout for God and our right!  
*Chorus.*—Shout for England! etc.

### NATIONAL SONG

THERE is no land like England  
 Where'er the light of day be;  
 There are no hearts like English  
 hearts,  
 Such hearts of oak as they be.  
 There is no land like England  
 Where'er the light of day be;  
 There are no men like English-  
 men,  
 So tall and bold as they be.

*Chorus.*—For the French the pope may  
 shrive 'em.  
 For the devil a whit we heed 'em:  
 As for the French, God speed 'em  
 Unto their heart's desire,  
 And the merry devil drive 'em  
 Through the water and the fire.

*Full Chorus.*—Our glory is our freedom,  
 We lord it o'er the sea;  
 We are the sons of freedom,  
 We are free.

There is no land like England,  
 Where'er the light of day be;  
 There are no wives like English  
 wives,  
 So fair and chaste as they be.  
 There is no land like England,  
 Where'er the light of day be;  
 There are no maids like English  
 maids,  
 So beautiful as they be.

*Chorus.*—For the French, etc.

### DUALISMS

Two bees within a chrystal flowerbell  
 rockèd  
 Hum a lovelay to the westwind at  
 noontide.  
 Both alike, they buzz together,  
 Both alike, they hum together

Through and through the flowered  
 heather.  
 Where in a creeping cove the wave un-  
 shockèd  
 Lays itself calm and wide,  
 Over a stream two birds of glancing  
 feather  
 Do woo each other, carolling to-  
 gether.  
 Both alike, they glide together.  
 Side by side;  
 Both alike, they sing together,  
 Arching blueglossèd necks beneath the  
 purple weather.  
 Two children lovelier than Love adown  
 the lea are singing,  
 As they gambol, lilygarlands ever  
 stringing:  
 Both in blosmwhite silk are frockèd:  
 Like, unlike, they roam together  
 Under a summervault of golden  
 weather;  
 Like, unlike, they sing together  
 Side by side,  
 MidMay's darling goldenlockèd,  
 Summer's tanling diamondeyed.

### Oi péorjes

#### I

ALL thoughts, all creeds, all dreams are  
 true,  
 All visions wild and strange;  
 Man is the measure of all truth  
 Unto himself. All truth is change:  
 All men do walk in sleep, and all  
 Have faith in that they dream:  
 For all things are as they seem to all,  
 And all things flow like a stream.

#### II

There is no rest, no calm, no pause,  
 Nor good nor ill, nor light nor shade,  
 Nor essence nor eternal laws:  
 For nothing is but all is made.  
 But if I dream that all these are,  
 They are to me for that I dream;  
 For all things are as they seem to all,  
 And all things flow like a stream.

*Argal*—this very opinion is only true  
 relatively to the flowing philosophers.

## NO MORE

### NO MORE

*The Gem, 1831*

OH sad *No More!* Oh sweet *No More!*

Oh strange *No More!*

By a mossed brookbank on a stone

I smelt a wildweed-flower alone;

There was a ringing in my ears,

And both my eyes gushed out with tears.

Surely all pleasant things had gone before,

Lowburied fathomdeep beneath with thee,

NO MORE!

### ANACREONTICS

*The Gem, 1831*

WITH roses muskybreathed,

And drooping daffodilly,

And silverleaved lily,

And ivy darkly-wreathed,

I wove a crown before her

For her I love so dearly,

A garland for Lenora.

With a silken cord I bound it.

Lenora, laughing clearly

A light and thrilling laughter,

About her forehead wound it,

And loved me ever after.

### A FRAGMENT

*The Gem, 1831*

WHERE is the Giant of the Sun, which  
stood

In the midnoon the glory of old Rhodes,

A perfect Idol with profulgent brows

Farsheening down the purple seas to those

Who sailed from Mizraim underneath the  
star

Named of the dragon—and between whose  
limbs

Of brassy vastness broadblown Argosies

Drave into haven? Yet endure unscathed

Of changeful cycles the great Pyramids

Broadbased amid the fleeting sands, and  
sloped

Into the slumbrous summernoon; but  
where,

Mysterious Egypt, are thine obelisks

Graven with gorgeous emblems undis-  
cerned?

Thy placid Sphinxes brooding o'er the  
Nile?

Thy shadowing Idols in the solitudes,

Awful Memnonian countenances calm

Looking athwart the burning flats, far off

Seen by the highnecked camel on the verge

Journeying southward? where thy monu-  
ments

Piled by the strong and sunborn Anakim

Over their crowned brethren ON and OPH?

Thy Memnon when his peaceful lips are  
kist

With earliest rays, that from his mother's  
eyes

Flow over the Arabian bay, no more

Breathes low into the charmed ears of morn

Clear melody flattering the crisped Nile

By columned Thebes. Old Memphis hath  
gone down:

The Pharaohs are no more: somewhere in  
death

They sleep with staring eyes and gilded  
lips,

Wrapped round with spiced cerements in  
old grots

Rockhewn and sealed for ever.

### SONNET

*Englishman's Magazine, August 1831*

CHECK every outflash, every ruder sally

Of thought and speech; speak low, and

give up wholly

Thy spirit to mild-minded Melancholy;

This is the place. Through yonder popu-  
lar alley,

Below, the blue-green river windeth slowly;

But in the middle of the sombre valley,

The crisped waters whisper musically,

And all the haunted place is dark and  
holy.

The nightingale, with long and low pre-  
amble,

Warbled from yonder knoll of solemn

larches, [arches

And in and out the woodbine's flowery

The summer midges wove their wanton

gambol,

And all the white stemmed pinewood slept

above—

When in this valley first I told my love.

## SONNET

### SONNET

*Yorkshire Literary Annual, 1832*

THERE are three things which fill my heart  
with sighs,  
And steep my soul in laughter (when I  
view  
Fair maiden-forms moving like melodies)  
Dimples, roselips, and eyes of any hue.  
There are three things beneath the blessed  
skies  
For which I live, black eyes and brown and  
blue:  
I hold them all most dear, but oh! black  
eyes,  
I live and die, and only die for you.  
Of late such eyes looked at me—while I  
mused,  
At sunset, underneath a shadowy plane,  
In old Bayona nigh the southern sea—  
From an half-open lattice looked at me.  
I saw no more—only those eyes—confused  
And dazzled to the heart with glorious pain.

### SONNET

*Friendship's Offering, 1832*

ME my own Fate to lasting sorrow doom-  
eth:  
Thy woes are birds of passage, transi-  
tory:  
Thy spirit, circled with a living glory,  
In summer still a summer joy resumeth.  
Alone my hopeless melancholy gloometh,  
Like a lone cypress, through the twilight  
hoary,  
From an old garden where no flower  
bloometh,  
One cypress on an inland promontory.  
But yet my lonely spirit follows thine,  
As round the rolling earth night follows  
day:  
But yet thy lights on my horizon shine  
Into my night, when thou art far away.  
I am so dark, alas! and thou so bright,  
When we two meet there's never perfect  
light.

## FROM 'POEMS'

1833

### SONNET

O BEAUTY, passing beauty! sweetest Sweet!  
How can'st thou let me waste my youth  
in sighs?  
I only ask to sit beside thy feet.  
Thou knowest I dare not look into thine  
eyes.  
Might I but kiss thy hand! I dare not  
fold  
My arms about thee—scarcely dare to  
speak.  
And nothing seems to me so wild and bold,  
As with one kiss to touch thy blessed  
cheek.  
Methinks if I should kiss thee, no control  
Within the thrilling brain could keep  
afloat  
The subtle spirit. Even while I spoke,  
The bare word KISS hath made my inner  
soul  
To tremble like a lutestring, ere the note  
Hath melted in the silence that it  
broke.

### THE PALACE OF ART

When I first conceived the plan of the Palace  
of Art, I intended to have introduced both  
sculptures and paintings into it; but it is the  
most difficult of all things to *devise* a statue in  
verse. Judge whether I have succeeded in the  
statues of Elijah and Olympias.

ONE was the Tishbite whom the raven fed,  
As when he stood on Carmel-steeps,  
With one arm stretched out bare, and  
mocked and said,  
'Come cry aloud—he sleeps.'

Tall, eager, lean and strong, his cloak  
windborne  
Behind, his forehead heavenly-bright  
From the clear marble pouring glorious  
scorn,  
Lit as with inner light.

One was Olympias: the floating snake  
Rolled round her ankles, round her waist  
Knotted, and folded once about her neck,  
Her perfect lips to taste

## THE PALACE OF ART

Round by the shoulder moved: she seem-  
ing blithe

Declined her head: on every side  
The dragon's curves melted and mingled  
with

The woman's youthful pride

Of rounded limbs.

If the Poem were not already too long, I  
should have inserted in the text the following  
stanzas, expressive of the joy wherewith the  
soul contemplated the results of astronomical  
experiment. In the centre of the four quad-  
rangles rose an immense tower.

HITHER, when all the deep unsounded  
skies

Shuddered with silent stars, she clomb,  
And as with optic glasses her keen eyes  
Pierced thro' the mystic dome,

Regions of lucid matter taking forms,  
Brushes of fire, hazy gleams,  
Clusters and beds of worlds, and bee-like  
swarms

Of suns, and starry streams.

She saw the snowy poles of moonless Mars,  
That marvellous round of milky light  
Below Orion, and those double stars  
Whereof the one more bright

Is circled by the other, &c.

### THE HESPERIDES<sup>1</sup>

'Hesperus and his daughters three,  
That sing about the golden tree.'

*Comus*

THE Northwind fall'n, in the newstarrèd  
night

Zidonian Hanno, voyaging beyond  
The hoary promontory of Soloe  
Past Thymiaterion, in calmèd bays,  
Between the southern and the western  
Horn,

Heard neither warbling of the nightingale,  
Nor melody o' the Lybian lotusflute  
Blown seaward from the shore; but from a  
slope

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson, in a conversation with his son, regretted that he had done away with this poem from among his 'Juvenilia' (*Life*, i. 61).

That ran bloombright into the Atlantic  
blue,

Beneath a highland leaning down a weight  
Of cliffs, and zoned below with cedarshade,  
Came voices, like the voices in a dream,  
Continuous, till he reached the outer sea.

## SONG

### I

THE golden apple, the golden apple, the  
hallowed fruit,

Guard it well, guard it warily,

Singing airily,

Standing about the charmed root.

Round about all is mute,

As the snowfield on the mountain-peaks,

As the sandfield at the mountain-foot.

Crocodiles in briny creeks

Sleep and stir not: all is mute.

If ye sing not, if ye make false measure,

We shall lose eternal pleasure,

Worth eternal want of rest.

Laugh not loudly: watch the treasure

Of the wisdom of the west.

In a corner wisdom whispers. Five and  
three

(Let it not be preached abroad) make an  
awful mystery.

For the blossom unto threefold music  
bloweth;

Evermore it is born anew;

And the sap to threefold music floweth,

From the root

Drawn in the dark,

Up to the fruit,

Creeping under the fragrant bark,  
Liquid gold, honeysweet, thro' and thro'.

Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,

Looking warily

Every way,

Guard the apple night and day,

Lest one from the East come and take it  
away.

### II

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch,  
watch, ever and ay,

Looking under silver hair with a silver eye.  
Father, twinkle not thy steadfast sight;

## THE HESPERIDES

Kingdoms lapse, and climates change, and  
races die;

Honour comes with mystery;  
Hoarded wisdom brings delight.  
Number, tell them over and number  
How many the mystic fruittree holds,  
Lest the redcombed dragon slumber  
Rolled together in purple folds.

Look to him, father, lest he wink, and the  
golden apple be stol'n away,

For his ancient heart is drunk with over-  
watchings night and day,

Round about the hallowed fruittree curled—  
Sing away, sing aloud evermore in the  
wind, without stop,

Lest his scaled eyelid drop,  
For he is older than the world.

If he waken, we waken,  
Rapidly levelling eager eyes.

If he sleep, we sleep,  
Dropping the eyelid over the eyes.

If the golden apple be taken  
The world will be overwise.

Five links, a golden chain, are we,  
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,  
Bound about the golden tree.

### III

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch,  
watch, night and day,

Lest the old wound of the world be healed,  
The glory unscaled,

The golden apple stol'n away,  
And the ancient secret revealed.

Look from west to east along:  
Father, old Himaia weakens, Caucasus is  
bold and strong.

Wandering waters unto wandering waters  
call;

Let them clash together, foam and fall.

Out of watchings, out of wiles,  
Comes the bliss of secret smiles.

All things are not told to all.  
Half-round the mantling night is drawn,  
Purplefringed with even and dawn.

Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening hateth  
morn.

### IV

Every flower and every fruit the redolent  
breath

Of this warm seawind ripeneth,  
Arching the billow in his sleep;  
But the landwind wandereth,  
Broken by the highland-steep,  
Two streams upon the violet deep:

For the western sun and the western star,  
And the low west wind, breathing afar,  
The end of day and beginning of night  
Make the apple holy and bright;

Holy and bright, round and full, bright and  
blest,

Mellowed in a land of rest;

Watch it warily day and night;

All good things are in the west.

'Till midnoon the cool east light

Is shut out by the round of the tall hill-  
brow;

But when the fullfaced sunset yellowly  
Stays on the flowering arch of the bough,  
The luscious fruitage clustereth mellowly,  
Goldenkernelled, goldencored,  
Sunset-ripened above on the tree.

The world is wasted with fire and sword,  
But the apple of gold hangs over the sea.

Five links, a golden chain, are we,  
Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,

Daughters three,

Bound about

All round about

The gnarled bole of the charmed tree.

The golden apple, the golden apple, the  
hallowed fruit,

Guard it well, guard it warily,

Watch it warily,

Singing airily,

Standing about the charmed root.

[NOTE TO *ROSALIND* (see p. 20)]

Perhaps the following lines may be allowed  
to stand as a separate poem; originally they  
made part of the text, where they were mani-  
festly superfluous.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
Bold, subtle, careless Rosalind,  
Is one of those who know no strife  
Of inward woe or outward fear;  
To whom the slope and stream of life,  
The life before, the life behind,  
In the ear, from far and near,  
Chimeth musically clear.  
My falconhearted Rosalind,

## ROSALIND

Fullsailed before a vigorous wind,  
Is one of those, who cannot weep  
For others' woes, but overleap  
All the petty shocks and fears  
That trouble life in early years,  
With a flash of frolic scorn  
And keen delight, that never falls  
Away from freshness, self-upborne  
With such gladness as, whenever  
The freshflushing springtime calls  
To the flooding waters cool,  
Young fishes, on an April morn,  
Up and down a rapid river,  
Leap the little waterfalls  
That sing into the pebbled pool.  
My happy falcon, Rosalind,  
Hath daring fancies of her own,  
Fresh as the dawn before the day,  
Fresh as the early seasmell blown  
Through vineyards from an inland bay.  
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
Because no shadow on you falls  
Think you hearts are tennisballs,  
To play with, wanton Rosalind?

### A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

[The four initial verses in 1833, subsequently omitted]

#### I

As when a man, that sails in a balloon,  
Downlooking sees the solid shining  
ground  
Stream from beneath him in the broad blue  
noon,  
Tilth, hamlet, mead and mound:

#### II

And takes his flags and waves them to the  
mob,  
That shout below, all faces turned to  
where  
Glow rubylike the far-up crimson globe,  
Filled with a finer air:

#### III

So, lifted high, the Poet at his will  
Lets the great world flit from him, see-  
ing all,  
Higher thro' secret splendours mounting  
still,  
Selfpoised, nor fears to fall,

#### IV

Hearing apart the echoes of his fame.  
While I spoke thus, the seedsman,  
memory,  
Sowed my deepfurrowed thought with  
many a name,  
Whose glory will not die.

### SONG

WHO can say  
Why Today  
Tomorrow will be yesterday?  
Who can tell  
Why to smell  
The violet, recalls the dewy prime  
Of youth and buried time?  
The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

### SONNET

WRITTEN ON HEARING OF THE OUT-  
BREAK OF THE POLISH INSURRECTION

Blow ye the trumpet, gather from afar  
The hosts to battle: be not bought and sold.  
Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the bold;  
Break through your iron shackles—fling  
them far.

O for those days of Piast, ere the Czar  
Grew to this strength among his deserts  
cold;

When even to Moscow's cupolas were  
rolled

The growing murmurs of the Polish war!  
Now must your noble anger blaze out  
more

Than when from Sobieski, clan by clan,  
The Moslem myriads fell, and fled before—  
Than when Zamoysky smote the Tartar  
Khan;

Than earlier, when on the Baltic shore  
Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

### O DARLING ROOM

#### I

O DARLING room, my heart's delight,  
Dear room, the apple of my sight,  
With thy two couches soft and white,  
There is no room so exquisite,  
No little room so warm and bright,  
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

## O DARLING ROOM

### II

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,  
And Oberwinter's vineyards green,  
Musical Lurlei; and between  
The hills to Bingen have I been,  
Bingen in Darmstadt, where the Rhene  
Curves toward Mentz, a woody scene.

### III

Yet never did there meet my sight,  
In any town, to left or right,  
A little room so exquisite,  
With two such couches, soft and white;  
Not any room so warm and bright,  
Wherein to read, wherein to write.

### TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH

You did late review my lays,  
Crusty Christopher;  
You did mingle blame and praise,  
Rusty Christopher.  
When I learnt from whom it came,  
I forgave you all the blame,  
Musty Christopher;  
I could *not* forgive the praise,  
Fusty Christopher.

### STANZAS

[The last five of sixteen stanzas in *The Tribute*, 1837. The preceding stanzas, commencing 'Oh! that 'twere possible', were incorporated in 'Maud', see p. 282.]

BUT she tarries in her place,  
And I paint the beauteous face  
Of the maiden that I lost,  
In my inner eyes again;  
Lest my heart be overborne  
By the thing I hold in scorn,  
By a dull mechanic ghost  
And a juggle of the brain.

I can shadow forth my bride,  
As I knew her fair and kind,  
As I woo'd her for my wife;  
She is lovely by my side  
In the silence of my life—  
'Tis a phantom of the mind.

'Tis a phantom fair and good  
I can call it to my side,  
So to guard my life from ill,  
Tho' its ghastly sister glide;  
And be moved around me still  
With the moving of the blood,  
That is moved not of the will.

Let it pass the dreary brow,  
Let the dismal face go by;  
Will it lead me to the grave?  
Then I lose it: it will fly:  
Can it overlast the nerves?  
Can it overlive the eye?

But the other, like a star,  
Thro' the channel windeth far  
Till it fade and fail and die;  
To its archetype that waits,  
Clad in light by golden gates—  
Clad in light the Spirit waits  
To embrace me in the sky.

### THE SKIPPING-ROPE

*Poems*, ed. i, 1842 to ed. 6, 1850

SURE never yet was Antelope  
Could skip so lightly by.  
Stand off, or else my skipping-rope  
Will hit you in the eye.  
How lightly whirls the skipping-rope!  
How fairy-like you fly!  
Go, get you gone, you muse and mope—  
I hate that silly sigh.  
Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,  
Or tell me how to die.  
There, take it, take my skipping-rope,  
And hang yourself thereby.

### THE NEW TIMON, AND THE POETS

*Punch*, 28 Feb. 1846, signed 'Alcibiades'

WE know him, out of SHAKESPEARE's art,  
And those fine curses which he spoke;  
The old TIMON, with his noble heart,  
That, strongly loathing, greatly broke.

So died the Old: here comes the New.  
Regard him: a familiar face:  
I *thought* we knew him: What, it's you,  
The padded man—that wears the stays—



## THE NEW TIMON, AND THE POETS

Who kill'd the girls and thrill'd the boys,  
With dandy pathos when you wrote,  
A Lion, you, that made a noise,  
And shook a mane en papillotes.

And once you tried the Muses too;  
You fail'd, Sir: therefore now you turn,  
You fall on those who are to you,  
As Captain is to Subaltern.

But men of long-enduring hopes,  
And careless what this hour may bring,  
Can pardon little would-be POPES  
And BRUMMELS, when they try to sting.

An artist, Sir, should rest in Art,  
And waive a little of his claim;  
To have the deep Poetic heart  
Is more than all poetic fame.

But you, Sir, you are hard to please;  
You never look but half content:  
Nor like a gentleman at ease,  
With moral breadth of temperament.

And what with spites and what with fears,  
You cannot let a body be:  
It's always ringing in your ears,  
'They call this man as good as *me*.'

What profits now to understand  
The merits of a spotless shirt—  
A dapper boot—a little hand—  
If half the little soul is dirt?

You talk of tinsel! why we see  
The old mark of rouge upon your cheeks.  
You prate of Nature! you are he  
That spilt his life about the cliques.

A TIMON you! Nay, nay, for shame:  
It looks too arrogant a jest—  
The fierce old man—to take *his* name,  
You bandbox. Off, and let him rest.

### LINES

*Manchester Athenæum Album, 1850*

HERE often, when a child, I lay reclined,  
I took delight in this locality.  
Here stood the infant Ilion of the mind,  
And here the Grecian ships did seem to  
be.

And here again I come, and only find  
The drain-cut levels of the marshy lea,—  
Grey sandbanks, and pale sunsets,—dreary  
wind,  
Dim shores, dense rains, and heavy-  
clouded sea!

### STANZAS

*Keepsake, 1851*

WHAT time I wasted youthful hours,  
One of the shining wingèd powers  
Show'd me vast cliffs, with crowns of  
towers.

As towards that gracious light I bow'd,  
They seem'd high palaces and proud,  
Hid now and then with sliding cloud.

He said, 'The labour is not small;  
Yet winds the pathway free to all:—  
Take care thou dost not fear to fall!'

### BRITONS, GUARD YOUR OWN

*Examiner, 31 Jan. 1852*

RISE, Britons, rise, if manhood be not dead;  
The world's last tempest darkens over-  
head;

The Pope has bless'd him;  
The Church caress'd him;  
He triumphs: may be, we shall stand alone:  
Britons, guard your own.

His ruthless host is bought with plunder'd  
gold,  
By lying priests the peasant's vote con-  
troll'd;

All freedom vanish'd,  
The true men banish'd,  
He triumphs; may be, we shall stand alone:  
Britons, guard your own.

Peace-lovers we—sweet Peace we all de-  
sire—

Peace-lovers we—but who can trust a  
liar?—

Peace-lovers, haters  
Of shameless traitors,  
We hate not France, but this man's heart  
of stone.  
Britons, guard your own.

## BRITONS, GUARD YOUR OWN

We hate not France, but France has lost  
her voice,  
This man is France, the man they call her  
choice.  
By tricks and spying,  
And craft and lying,  
And murder, was her freedom overthrown.  
Britons, guard your own.

'Vive l'Empereur' may follow by and bye,  
'God save the Queen' is here a truer cry,  
God save the nation,  
The toleration,  
And the free speech that makes a Briton  
known.  
Britons, guard your own.

Rome's dearest daughter now is captive  
France,  
The Jesuit laughs, and reckoning on his  
chance  
Would unrelenting  
Kill all dissenting,  
Till we were left to fight for truth alone.  
Britons, guard your own.

Call home your ships across Biscayan tides,  
To blow the battle from their oaken sides.  
Why waste they yonder  
Their idle thunder?  
Why stay they there to guard a foreign  
throne?  
Seamen, guard your own.

We were the best of marksmen long ago,  
We won old battles with our strength, the  
bow.  
Now practise, yeomen,  
Like those bowmen,  
Till your balls fly as their true shafts have  
flown.  
Yeomen, guard your own.

His soldier-ridden Highness might incline  
To shake Sardinia, Belgium, or the Rhine:  
Shall we stand idle,  
Nor seek to bridle  
His vile aggressions till we stand alone?—  
Make their cause your own!

Should he land here, and for one hour pre-  
vail,

There must no man go back to bear the  
tale:  
No man to bear it,—  
Swear it! We swear it!  
Although we fought the banded world  
alone,  
We swear to guard our own.

### FOR THE PENNY-WISE

*Fraser's Magazine*, Feb. 1852

We used to fight the French,  
And beat them, says the story;  
But now the cry 'retrench'  
Has a little dock'd our glory.

We meant to beat the Kaffirs,  
We had the best intentions;  
But the Kaffirs knock'd us over,  
With the last inventions.

Poor little people, we,  
And in the world belated!  
Our musket, as it seems,  
Is superannuated.

Friends! the soldier still  
Is worthy of his calling,  
But who are they that want  
A little over-hauling?

### SUGGESTED BY READING AN ARTICLE IN A NEWSPAPER

*Examiner*, 14 Feb. 1852

SIR,—I have read with much interest the  
poems by MERLIN. The enclosed is longer than  
either of those, and certainly not so good; yet  
as I flatter myself that it has a smack of Merlin's  
style in it, and as I feel that it expresses forcibly  
enough some of the feelings of our time, per-  
haps you may be induced to admit it.

TALIESSIN.

How much I love this writer's manly style!  
By such men led, our press had ever  
been  
The public conscience of our noble isle,  
Severe and quick to feel a civic sin,  
To raise the people and chastise the times  
With such a heat as lives in great creative  
rhymes.

## AN ARTICLE IN A NEWSPAPER

O you, the Press! what good from you  
might spring!

What power is yours to blast a cause or  
bless!

I fear for you, as for some youthful king,  
Lest you go wrong from power in excess.  
Take heed of your wide privileges! we,  
The thinking men of England, loathe a  
tyranny.

A freeman is, I doubt not, freest here;  
The single voice may speak his mind  
aloud;

An honest isolation need not fear  
The court, the church, the Parliament,  
the crowd,

No, nor the Press! and look you well to  
that—

We must not dread in you the nameless  
Autocrat.

And you, dark Senate of the public pen,  
You may not, like yon tyrant, deal in  
spies.

Yours are the public acts of public men,  
But yours are not their household priva-  
cies.

I grant you one of the Great Powers on  
earth,

But he not you the blatant traitors of the  
hearth.

You hide the hand that writes: it must be  
so,

For better so you fight for public ends;  
But some you strike can scarce return the  
blow;

You should be all the nobler, O my  
friends.

Be noble, you! nor work with faction's  
tools

To charm a lower sphere of fulminating  
fools.

But, knowing all your power to heat or  
cool,

To soothe a civic wound or keep it raw,  
Be loyal, if you wish for wholesome rule:

Our ancient boast is this—we reverence  
law.

We still were loyal in our wildest fights,  
Or, loyally disloyal, battled for our rights.

O Grief and Shame if while I preach of  
laws

Whereby to guard our freedom from  
offence—

And trust an ancient manhood and the  
cause

Of England and her health of common  
sense—

There hang within the heavens a dark dis-  
grace,

Some vast Assyrian doom to burst upon  
our race.

I feel the thousand cankers of our state,  
I fain would shake their triple-folded  
ease,

The hogs, who can believe in nothing great,  
Sneering bedridden in the down of  
Peace,

Over their scrips and shares, their meats  
and wine,

With stony smirks at all things human and  
divine!

I honour much, I say, this man's appeal.

We drag so deep in our commercial mire,  
We move so far from greatness that I feel  
Exception to be character'd in fire.

Who looks for Godlike Greatness here shall  
see

The British Goddess, sleek Respectability.

Alas for her and all her small delights!

She feels not how the social frame is  
rack'd.

She loves a little scandal which excites;

A little feeling is a want of tact.

For her there lie in wait millions of foes,  
And yet the 'Not too much' is all the rule  
she knows.

Poor soul! behold her: what decorous  
calm!—

She, with her weekday worldliness suf-  
ficed,

Stands in her pew and hums her decent  
psalm,

With decent dippings at the name of  
Christ!

And she has moved on that smooth way so  
long,

She hardly can believe that she shall suffer  
wrong.

## AN ARTICLE IN A NEWSPAPER

Alas, our Church! alas, her growing ills,  
And those who tolerate not her tolerance,  
But needs must sell the burthen of their  
wills

To that half-pagan harlot kept by France!  
Free subjects of the kindest of all thrones,  
Headlong they plunge their doubts among  
old rags and bones.

Alas, church-writers, altercation tribes—  
The vessel of your church may sink in  
storms;

Christ cried, Woe, woe to Pharisees and  
scribes;

Like them, you bicker less for truth than  
forms.

I sorrow when I read the things you write,  
What unheroic pertness! what unchristian  
spite!

Alas, our youth, so clever yet so small,  
Thin dilettanti deep in nature's plan,  
Who make the emphatic One, by whom is  
all,

An essence less concentrated than a  
man!—

Better wild Mahmoud's war-cry once  
again!

O fools, we want a manlike God and God-  
like men.

Go, frightful omens. Yet once more I turn  
To you that mould men's thoughts, I  
call on you

To make opinion warlike, lest we learn  
A sharper lesson than we ever knew.

I hear a thunder though the skies are fair,  
But shrill you, loud and long, the warning  
note—Prepare.

### STANZAS ON THE MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCESS ROYAL

*Times*, 26 Jan. 1858

GOD bless our Prince and Bride!  
God keep their lands allied.

God save the Queen!

Clothe them with righteousness,

Crown them with happiness,

Them with all blessings bless,

God save the Queen!

Fair fall this hallow'd hour,  
Farewell our England's flower,

God save the Queen.

Farewell, fair rose of May!

Let both the peoples say,

God bless thy marriage day,

God bless the Queen!

### EPITAPH ON THE DUCHESS OF KENT

*Court Journal*, 19 March 1864

'Her children rise up and call her blessed.'

LONG as the heart beats life within her  
breast,

Thy child will bless thee, guardian,  
mother mild,

And far away thy memory will be blest,  
By children of the children of thy child.

### THE RINGLET

*Enoch Arden*, etc., 1864

I

I

'YOUR ringlets, your ringlets,

That look so golden-gay,

If you will give me one, but one,

To kiss it night and day,

Then never chilling touch of Time

Will turn it silver-grey;

And then shall I know it is all true gold

To flame and sparkle and stream as of old,

Till all the comets in heaven are cold,

And all her stars decay.'

'Then take it, love, and put it by;

This cannot change, nor yet can I.'

II

'My ringlet, my ringlet,

That art so golden-gay,

Now never chilling touch of Time

Can turn thee silver-grey;

And a lad may wink, and a girl may hint,

And a fool may say his say;

For my doubts and fears were all amiss,

And I swear henceforth by this and this,

That a doubt will only come for a kiss,

And a fear to be kiss'd away.'

'Then kiss it, love, and put it by:

If this can change, why so can I.'

## THE RINGLET

### II

#### I

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I kidd'd you night and day,  
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
You still are golden-gay,  
But Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
You should be silver-grey:  
For what is this which now I'm told,  
I that took you for true gold,  
She that gave you 's bought and sold,  
Sold, sold.

#### II

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She blush'd a rosy red,  
When Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She clipt you from her head,  
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
She gave you me, and said,  
'Come, kiss it, love, and put it by:  
If this can change, why so can I.'  
O fie, you golden nothing, fie,  
You golden lie.

#### III

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I count you much to blame,  
For Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
You put me much to shame,  
So Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I doom you to the flame.  
For what is this which now I learn,  
Has given all my faith a turn?  
Burn, you glossy heretic, burn,  
Burn, burn.

### SONG

*Selections, 1865*

LADY, let the rolling drums  
Beat to battle where thy warrior stands:

Now thy face across his fancy comes,  
And gives the battle to his hands.

Lady, let the trumpets blow,  
Clasp thy little babes about thy knee:  
Now their warrior father meets the foe,  
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

### SONG

*Selections, 1865*

HOME they brought him slain with spears.  
They brought him home at even-fall:  
All alone she sits and hears  
Echoes in his empty hall,  
Sounding on the morrow.

The Sun peep'd in from open field,  
The boy began to leap and prance,  
Rode upon his father's lance, -  
Beat upon his father's shield—  
'O hush, my joy, my sorrow.'

1865—1866

*Good Words, March 1868*

I STOOD on a tower in the wet  
And New Year and Old Year met,  
And winds were roaring and blowing;  
And I said, 'O years, that meet in tears,  
Have ye aught that is worth the knowing?  
Science enough and exploring,  
Wanderers coming and going,  
Matter enough for deploring,  
But aught that is worth the knowing?'  
Seas at my feet were flowing,  
Waves on the shingle pouring,  
Old Year roaring and blowing,  
And New Year blowing and roaring.

# INDEX OF TITLES

Achilles over the Trench, 498.

Adeline, 19.

Akbar's Dream, 817.

All things will die, 2.

Amphion, 101.

Anacreontics, 844.

Ancient Sage, The, 508.

Audley Court, 75.

Aylmer's Field, 133.

Balin and Balan, 344.

Ballad of Oriana, The, 16.

Bandit's Death, The, 822.

Battle of Brunanburh, 496.

Beautiful City, 812.

Becket, 646.

Beggar Maid, The, 111.

Blackbird, The, 58.

Boadicea, 224.

Britons, Guard your own, 850.

Brook, The, 130.

Burial of Love, The, 836.

By an Evolutionist, 811.

Captain, The, 107.

Character, A, 12.

Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava,  
The, 528.

Charge of the Light Brigade, The, 206.

Charity, 824.

Child-Songs, 220.

Chorus in an unpublished drama, written  
very early, 839.

Church-Warden and the Curate, The,  
823.

Circumstance, 17.

Claribel, 2.

Columbus, 487.

Come not, when I am dead, 112.

Coming of Arthur, The, 287.

Confessions of a Sensitive mind, 4.

Crossing the Bar, 831.

Cup, The, 699.

Daisy, The, 216.

Dawn, The, 827.

Day-Dream, The, 97.

De Profundis, 494.

Dead Prophet, The, 531.

Death of CEnone, The, 814.

Death of the Duke of Clarence, The, 830.

Death of the Old Year, The, 58.

Dedication (of Idylls of the King), 287.

Dedication poem to the Princess Alice, 481.

Defence of Lucknow, The, 482.

Demeter and Persephone, 785.

Deserted House, The, 15.

Despair, 505.

Dirge, A, 15.

Dora, 72.

Doubt and Prayers, 829.

Dream of Fair Women, A, 53.

Dreamer, The, 827.

Dualisms, 843.

Dying Swan, The, 15.

Eagle, The, 111.

Early Spring, 532.

Edward Gray, 103.

Edwin Morris, 78.

1865-1866, 854.

Eleánore, 21.

England and America in 1782, 62.

ENGLISH IDYLS, 63.

English Warsong, 842.

Enoch Arden, 117.

Epic, The, 63.

Épilogue, 529.

Epitaph on Caxton, 534.

Epitaph on the Duchess of Kent, 853.

Epitaph on General Gordon, 534.

Epitaph on Lord Stratford de Redcliffe,  
533.

Faith, 830.

Falcon, The, 714.

Far-Far-Away, 811.

Farewell, A, 111.

Fatima, 37.

First Quarrel, The, 463.

Fleet, The, 535.

Flight, The, 512.

Flower in the crannied wall, 224.

Flower, The, 219.

For the Penny-Wise, 851.

Foresters, The, 748.

Forlorn, 798.

Fragment, A, 844.

Frater Ave atque Vale, 533.

Freedom, 534.

Gardener's Daughter, The, 68.

Gareth and Lynette, 295.

Gersaint and Enid, 330.

God and the Universe, 830.

Godiva, 96.

# INDEX OF TITLES

Golden Year, The, 88.

Goose, The, 62.

Grandmother, The, 209.

Grasshopper, The, 839.

Guinevere, 423.

Hands all Round, 534.

Happy — The Leper's Bride, 799.

Harold: A Drama, 607.

Helen's Tower, 533.

Hero to Leander, 838.

Hesperides, The, 846.

Higher Pantheism, The, 222.

Holy Grail, The, 389.

'How' and the 'Why', The, 835.

Human Cry, The, 495.

IDYLLS OF THE KING, 287.

IN MEMORIAM (A. H. H.), 230.

In Memoriam (W. G. Ward), 813.

In the Children's Hospital, 480.

In the Garden at Swainston, 219.

In the Valley of Cauterez, 218.

Isabel, 6.

Islet, The, 220.

June Bracken and Heather, 814.

Kapiolani, 826.

Kate, 23.

Kraken, The, 5.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere, 46.

Lady Clare, 106.

Lady of Shallot, The, 26.

Lancelot and Elaine, 368.

Last Tournament, The, 412.

Leonine Elegiacs, 3.

Leper's Bride, The, 799.

Letters, The, 112.

Lilian, 6.

Lines (Here often—), 850.

Literary Squabbles, 221.

Locksley Hall, 91.

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After, 520.

Lord of Burleigh, The, 108.

Lost Hope, 840.

Lotos-Eaters, The, 51.

Love and Death, 16.

Love and Duty, 86.

Love and Sorrow, 840.

Love, pride, and forgetfulness, 839.

Love thou thy land, 61.

Lover's Tale, The, 442.

Lucretius, 150.

Madeline, 8.

Making of Man, The, 827.

Margaret, 20.

Mariana, 7.

Mariana in the South, 28.

Marriage of Geraint, The, 318.

MAUD, 266.

May Queen, The, 47.

Mechanophilus, 828.

Merlin and Vivian, 353.

Merlin and the Gleam, 806.

Mermaid, The, 18.

Merman, The, 18.

Miller's Daughter, The, 34.

Milton, 226.

Montenegro, 495.

Morte d'Arthur, 64.

Move eastward, happy earth, 111.

Mystic, The, 838.

National Song, 843.

New Timon, and the Poets, The, 849.

No more, 844.

Northern Cobbler, The, 467.

Northern Farmer, New Style, 214.

Northern Farmer, Old Style, 212.

Nothing will Die, 2.

O Darling Room, 848.

Oak, The, 813.

Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington, 202.

Ode sung at the opening of the International Exhibition, 207.

Ode to Memory, 10.

Ænone, 38.

Of old sat Freedom on the heights, 61.

*Oi péovres*, 843.

On a Mourner, 60.

On one who Affected an Effeminate Manner, 812.

On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, 783.

On Translations of Homer, 226.

Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition by the Queen, 536.

Owd Roa, 787.

Palace of Art, The, 42.

Parnassus, 810.

Passing of Arthur, The, 434.

Pelleas and Ettarre, 402.

Play, The, 812.

## INDEX OF TITLES

'Poems, Chiefly Lyrical', From, 835.

Poet, The, 13.

Poets and Critics, 829.

Poets and their Bibliographies, 537.

Poet's Mind, The, 13.

Poet's Song, The, 116.

Politics, 812.

Prefatory Poem to My Brother's Sonnets,  
533.

PRINCESS, THE, 154.

Progress of Spring, The, 804.

Prologue to General Hamley, 528.

Promise of May, The, 724.

Queen Mary: A Drama, 538.

Queen, To the, 1, 441.

Recollections of the Arabian Nights, 9.

Requiescat, 219.

Revenge, The, 470.

Riflemen Form, 828.

Ring, The, 791.

Ringlet, The, 853.

Rizpah, 465.

Romney's Remorse, 808.

Rosalind, 20; Note, 847.

Roses on the Terrace, The, 812.

Round Table, The, 295.

Sailor Boy, The, 219.

St. Agnes' Eve, 102.

St. Simeon Stylites, 80.

St. Telemachus, 816.

Sea Dreams, 145.

Sea-Fairies, The, 14.

Sir Galahad, 102.

Sir John Franklin, 498.

Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, 484.

Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere, 110.

Sisters, The, 41, 473.

Skipping-Rope, The, 849.

Snowdrop, The, 812.

Song, 5.

SONGS:

A spirits haunts the Year's last Hours,  
12.

Every Day hath its night, 837.

Home they brought him slain with  
spears, 854.

I' the glooming light, 836.

Lady, let the rolling drums, 854.

Lintwhite and the throblecock, The, 837.

Owl, The, 8.

Owl, The (second song), 9.

Who can say, 848.

SONNETS:

Alexander, 24.

Bridesmaid, The, 26.

Buonaparte, 24.

Caress'd or Chidden by the Slender

Hand, 25.

Check every outflash, every ruder sally,  
844.

Could I outwear my present state of  
woe, 841.

If I were loved, as I desire to be, 25.

Me my own Fate to lasting sorrow  
doometh, 845.

Mine be the Strength of Spirit, Full and  
Free, 24.

O Beauty, passing beauty! sweetest  
Sweet! 845.

Poland, 24.

Shall the hag Evil die with child of  
Good, 841.

The Form, The Form alone is Elo-  
quent, 25.

The pallid thunderstricken sigh for  
gain, 841.

There are three things which fill my  
heart with sighs, 845.

Though Night hath climbed her peak  
of highest noon, 841.

To — (As when with downcast eyes),  
23.

Wan sculptor, weepst thou to take the  
cast, 25.

Written on hearing of the outbreak of  
the Polish Insurrection, 848.

Specimen of a Translation of the Iliad in  
Blank Verse, 226.

Spinster's Sweet-Arts, 517.

Spiteful Letter, The, 221.

STANZAS:

But she tarries in her place, 849.

On the Marriage of the Princess Royal,  
853.

What time I wasted youthful hours, 850.

Suggested by Reading an Article in a  
Newspaper, 851.

Supposed Confessions, 3.

Talking Oak, The, 83.

Tears of Heaven, The, 840.

Third of February, The, 205.

Throstle, The, 812.

Timbuctoo, 832.

Tiresias, 499.



## INDEX OF TITLES

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>             Tithonus, 90.<br/>             To — After reading a Life and Letters,<br/>                 115.<br/>             To — (Clear-Headed Friend), 7.<br/>             To — (I send you here a sort of alle-<br/>                 gory), 42.<br/>             To — (Sainted Juliet! dearest name!),<br/>                 836.<br/>             To a Lady sleeping, 840.<br/>             To Alfred Tennyson, 463.<br/>             To Christopher North, 849.<br/>             To Dante, 498.<br/>             To E. FitzGerald, 499.<br/>             To E. L. on his Travels in Greece, 116.<br/>             To H.R.H. Princess Beatrice, 535.<br/>             To J. S., 59.<br/>             To Mary Boyle, 803.<br/>             To one who ran down the English, 812.<br/>             To Princess Frederica on her Marriage,<br/>                 498.<br/>             To Professor Jebb, 784.<br/>             To the Duke of Argyll, 534.<br/>             To the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, 783.<br/>             To the Master of Balliol, 814.<br/>             To the 'Nineteenth Century', 495.<br/>             To the Queen, 1, 441.<br/>             To the Reverend F. D. Maurice, 218.<br/>             To the Reverend W. H. Brookfield, 495.<br/>             To Ulysses, 802.<br/>             To Victor Hugo, 496.           </p> | <p>             To Virgil, 530.<br/>             To W. C. Macready, 537.<br/>             Tomorrow, 515.<br/>             Tournay, The, 829.<br/>             Two Voices, The, 29.<br/>             Ulysses, 89.<br/>             Vastness, 790.<br/>             Victim, The, 221.<br/>             Village Wife, The, 477.<br/>             Vision of Sin, The, 112.<br/>             Voice of the Peak, The, 223.<br/>             Voice Spake out of the Skies, A, 829.<br/>             Voyage of Maeldune, The, 491.<br/>             Voyage, The, 109.<br/>             Wages, 222.<br/>             Walking to the Mail, 76.<br/>             Wanderer, The, 829.<br/>             Welcome to Her Royal Highness Marie<br/>                 Alexandrovna Duchess of Edinburgh,<br/>                 208.<br/>             Wellington, Ode on the Death of the Duke<br/>                 of, 202.<br/>             Will, 218.<br/>             Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue, 104.<br/>             Window, The, 227.<br/>             Wreck, The, 502.<br/>             You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease, 60.           </p> |
|--|---|

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

A city clerk, but gently born and bred . . . . .	145
A Garden here—May breath and bloom of Spring . . . . .	607
A happy lover who has come . . . . .	232
A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime . . . . .	269
A plague upon the people fell . . . . .	221
A spirit haunts the year's last hours . . . . .	12
A still small voice spake unto me . . . . .	29
A storm was coming, but the winds were still . . . . .	353
A thousand summers ere the time of Christ . . . . .	508
A touch, a kiss! the charm was snapt . . . . .	99
A voice by the cedar tree . . . . .	270
A voice spake out of the skies . . . . .	829
Act first, this earth, a stage so gloom'd with woe . . . . .	812
Again at Christmas did we weave . . . . .	248
Ah, God! the petty fools of rhyme . . . . .	221
Airy, fairy Lilian . . . . .	6
All along the valley, stream that flashest white . . . . .	218
All precious things, discover'd late . . . . .	99
All thoughts, all creeds, all dreams are true . . . . .	843
Altho' I be the basest of mankind . . . . .	80
And all is well, tho' faith and form . . . . .	263
And on her lover's arm she leant . . . . .	99
And was the day of my delight . . . . .	236
And Willy, my eldest-born, is gone . . . . .	209
Angels have talked with him, and showed him thrones . . . . .	838
Are you sleeping? Have you forgotten? do not sleep my sister dear!	512
As sometimes in a dead man's face . . . . .	247
As thro' the land at eve we went . . . . .	161
As when a man, that sails in a balloon . . . . .	848
As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood . . . . .	23
Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea . . . . .	195
At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay . . . . .	470
At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve . . . . .	63
At times our Britain cannot rest . . . . .	783
Athelstan King . . . . .	496
Banner of England, not for a season . . . . .	482
Be merry, all birds, to-day . . . . .	229
Be near me when my light is low . . . . .	242
'Beat little heart—I give you this and this' . . . . .	808
Beautiful city, the centre and crater of European confusion . . . . .	812
Below the thunders of the upper deep . . . . .	5
Birds in the high Hall-garden . . . . .	274
Blow ye the trumpet, gather from afar . . . . .	848
Break, break, break, on thy cold gray stones, O Sea . . . . .	116
Brooks, for they call'd you so that knew you best . . . . .	495
Bury the Great Duke . . . . .	202
But she tarries in her place . . . . .	849
By night we linger'd on the lawn . . . . .	254

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Calm is the morn without a sound . . . . .	233
Caress'd or chidden by the slender hand . . . . .	25
Chains, my good lord: in your raised brows I read . . . . .	487
Check every outflash, every ruder sally . . . . .	844
Clear-headed friend, whose joyful scorn . . . . .	7
Clearly the blue river chimes in its flowing . . . . .	2
Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek . . . . .	268
Come into the garden, Maud . . . . .	279
Come not, when I am dead . . . . .	112
Come, when no graver cares employ . . . . .	218
Comrades, leave me here a little . . . . .	91
Contemplate all this work of Time . . . . .	261
Could I have said when he was here . . . . .	248
Could I outwear my present state of woe . . . . .	841
Could we forget the widow'd hour . . . . .	240
'Courage!' he said, and pointed toward the land . . . . .	51
Courage, poor heart of stone! . . . . .	282
Dagonet, the fool, whom Gawain in his mood . . . . .	412
Dainty little maiden, whither would you wander? . . . . .	220
Dark house, by which once more I stand . . . . .	232
Dead! And the Muses cried with a stormy cry . . . . .	531
Dead, long dead . . . . .	283
Dead Princess, living Power, if that, which lived . . . . .	487
Dear friend, far off, my lost desire . . . . .	264
Dear master in our classic gown . . . . .	814
Deep on the convent-roof the snows . . . . .	102
Dip down upon the northern shore . . . . .	249
Do we indeed desire the dead . . . . .	242
Doors, where my heart was used to beat . . . . .	261
Do'snt thou 'ear my 'erse's legs . . . . .	214
Dost thou look back on what hath been . . . . .	245
Doubt no longer that the Highest is the wisest and the best . . . . .	830
Dust are our frames; and, gilded dust our pride . . . . .	133
Eh? good daäy! good daäy! thaw it bean't not mooch of a daäy . . . . .	823
Elaine the fair, Elaine the loveable . . . . .	368
Ere yet my heart was sweet Love's tomb . . . . .	839
Every day hath its night . . . . .	837
Eyes not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed . . . . .	6
Faint as a climate-changing bird that flies . . . . .	785
Fair is her cottage in its place . . . . .	219
Fair ship, that from the Italian shore . . . . .	232
Fair things are slow to fade away . . . . .	784
Farewell, Macready, since to-night we part . . . . .	537
Farewell, whose living like I shall not find . . . . .	813
Fifty times the rose has flower'd and faded . . . . .	783
First pledge our Queen this solemn night . . . . .	534
Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea . . . . .	111
Flower in the crannied wall . . . . .	224
From art, from nature, from the schools . . . . .	242
From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done . . . . .	389
From that Time forth I would not see her more . . . . .	454
Full knee-deep lies the winter snow . . . . .	58

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song . . . . .	222
Go not, happy day . . . . .	276
God bless our Prince and Bride . . . . .	853
Golden-haired Ally whose name is one with mine . . . . .	463
Gone! Gone till the end of the year . . . . .	228
Had the fierce ashes of some fiery peak . . . . .	816
Half a league, half a league . . . . .	206
Hallowed by Thy name—Halleluah! . . . . .	495
He clasps the crag with crooked hands . . . . .	111
He flies the event: he leaves the event to me . . . . .	458
He is fled—I wish him dead . . . . .	798
He past; a soul of nobler tone . . . . .	244
He rose at dawn and, fired with hope . . . . .	219
He tasted love with half his mind . . . . .	253
He that only rules by terror . . . . .	107
He thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak . . . . .	24
Heart-affluence in discursive talk . . . . .	259
Heaven weeps above the earth all night till morn . . . . .	840
Helen's Tower, here I stand . . . . .	533
Her arms across her breast she laid . . . . .	111
Her brother is coming back to-night . . . . .	277
Her eyes are homes of silent prayer . . . . .	238
Her, that yere Honour was spakin' to? . . . . .	515
Here by this brook, we parted . . . . .	130
Here far away, seen from the topmost cliff . . . . .	442
Here, it is here, the close of the year . . . . .	221
Here often, when a child, I lay reclined . . . . .	850
Hide me, Mother! my fathers belong'd to the church of old . . . . .	502
High wisdom holds my wisdom less . . . . .	260
His eyes in eclipse . . . . .	836
Home they brought her warrior dead . . . . .	189
Home they brought him slain with spears . . . . .	854
How fares it with the happy dead? . . . . .	241
How long, O God, shall men be ridden down . . . . .	24
How many a father have I seen . . . . .	242
How much I love this writer's manly style . . . . .	851
How pure at heart and sound in head . . . . .	253
How sweet to have a common faith! . . . . .	4
I am any man's suitor . . . . .	835
I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house . . . . .	42
I came one day and sat among the stones . . . . .	457
I cannot love thee as I ought . . . . .	242
I cannot see the features right . . . . .	246
I climb the hill: from end to end . . . . .	256
I dream'd there would be Spring no more . . . . .	246
I envy not in any moods . . . . .	237
I had a vision when the night was late . . . . .	112
I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood . . . . .	266
I hear the noise about thy keel . . . . .	232
I held it truth, with him who sings . . . . .	230
I knew an old wife lean and poor . . . . .	62
I know her by her angry air . . . . .	23

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

I know that this was Life,—the track . . . . .	236
I leave thy praises unexpress'd . . . . .	247
I past beside the reverend walls . . . . .	251
I read, before my eyelids dropt their shade . . . . .	53
I see the wealthy miller yet . . . . .	34
I send you here a sort of allegory . . . . .	42
I shall not see thee. Dare I say . . . . .	253
I sing to him that rests below . . . . .	235
I sometimes hold it half a sin . . . . .	231
I stood on a tower in the wet . . . . .	854
I stood upon the Mountain which o'erlooks . . . . .	832
I' the glooming light . . . . .	836
I trust I have not wasted breath . . . . .	262
I vex my heart with fancies dim . . . . .	240
I wage not any feud with Death . . . . .	249
I waited for the train at Coventry . . . . .	96
I was chief of the race—he had stricken my father dead . . . . .	491
I was walking a mile . . . . .	272
I will not shut me from my kind . . . . .	259
I wish I were as in the years of old . . . . .	499
If any vague desire should rise . . . . .	248
If any vision should reveal . . . . .	253
If I were loved, as I desire to be . . . . .	25
If, in the second state sublime . . . . .	244
If one should bring me this report . . . . .	233
If Sleep and Death be truly one . . . . .	240
If these brief lays, of Sorrow born . . . . .	241
Illyrian woodlands, echoing falls . . . . .	116
I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look . . . . .	76
In her car he whispers gaily . . . . .	108
In those sad words I took farewell . . . . .	244
Is it, then, regret for buried time . . . . .	261
Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel there looking over the sand? . . . . .	505
It is the day when he was born . . . . .	258
It little profits that an idle king . . . . .	89
It was the time when lilies blow . . . . .	106
King Arthur made new knights to fill the gap . . . . .	402
King, that hast reign'd six hundred years . . . . .	498
Lady Clara Vere de Vere . . . . .	46
Lady, let the rolling drums . . . . .	854
Late, my grandson! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracks . . . . .	520
Leodogran, the King of Cameliard . . . . .	287
Life and Thought have gone away . . . . .	15
'Light of the nations' ask'd his Chronicler . . . . .	817
Light so low upon earth . . . . .	229
Like souls that balance joy and pain . . . . .	110
Live thy life . . . . .	813
Lo, as a dove when up she springs . . . . .	233
Long as the heart beats life within her breast . . . . .	853
Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may find it at last! . . . . .	268
Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm . . . . .	117
Love is and was my Lord and King . . . . .	263
Love thou thy land . . . . .	61

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Low-flowing breezes are roaming . . . . .	3
Lucilia, wedded to Lucretius, found . . . . .	150
Many a heart upon our dark globe sighs . . . . .	790
Many, many welcomes . . . . .	812
Maud has a garden of roses . . . . .	275
Me my own Fate to lasting sorrow doometh . . . . .	845
Mellow moon of heaven . . . . .	791
Midnight—in no midsummer tune . . . . .	533
Milk for my sweet-arts, Bess . . . . .	517
Mine be the strength of spirit, full and free . . . . .	24
Minnie and Winnie . . . . .	220
'More than my brothers are to me' . . . . .	248
Move eastward, happy earth . . . . .	111
My father left a park to me . . . . .	101
My friend should meet me somewhere hercabout . . . . .	484
My good blade carves the casques of men . . . . .	102
My heart is wasted with my woe . . . . .	16
My life has crept so long on a broken wing . . . . .	285
My Lords, we heard you speak . . . . .	205
My love has talk'd with rocks and trees . . . . .	255
My own dim life should teach me this . . . . .	238
My Rosalind, my Rosalind . . . . .	20, 847
Mystery of mysteries . . . . .	19
Naay, noã mander o' use to be callin' 'im Roa . . . . .	787
Nature so far as in her lies . . . . .	60
Nightingales warbled without . . . . .	219
Not here! The white North has thy bones . . . . .	498
Not this way will you set your name . . . . .	529
Now fades the last long streak of snow. . . . .	260
Now first we stand and understand . . . . .	828
Now is done thy long day's work . . . . .	15
Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound . . . . .	181
Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut . . . . .	236
O Beauty, passing beauty! sweetest Sweet . . . . .	845
O Blackbird! sing me something well . . . . .	58
O Bridesmaid, ere the happy knot was tied . . . . .	26
O darling room, my heart's delight . . . . .	848
O days and hours, your work is this . . . . .	261
O God! my God! have mercy now . . . . .	3
O great and gallant Scott . . . . .	822
O Lady Flora, let me speak . . . . .	97
O let the solid ground . . . . .	273
O living will that shalt endure . . . . .	264
O Love, Love, Lovel! O withering might . . . . .	37
O love, what hours were thine and mine . . . . .	216
O loyal to the royal in thyself . . . . .	441
O maiden, fresher than the first green leaf . . . . .	840
O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake . . . . .	78
O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies . . . . .	226
O patriot statesman, be thou wise to know . . . . .	534
O plump head-waiter at the Cock . . . . .	104
O purblind race of miserable men . . . . .	330

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship . . . . .	231
O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me . . . . .	244
O sweet pale Margaret . . . . .	20
O that 'twere possible . . . . .	282
O thou so fair in summers gone . . . . .	534
O thou that after toil and storm . . . . .	238
O Thou, that sendest out the man . . . . .	62
O Thou whose fringed lids I gaze upon . . . . .	840
O well for him whose will is strong . . . . .	218
O you chorus of indolent reviewers . . . . .	226
O you that were eyes and light to the King till he past away . . . . .	498
O young mariner . . . . .	806
Ænone sat within the cave from out . . . . .	814
Of love that never found his earthly close . . . . .	86
Of old sat Freedom on the heights . . . . .	61
Oh go not yet, my love . . . . .	838
Oh sad <i>No More!</i> Oh sweet <i>No More!</i> . . . . .	844
Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then . . . . .	262
Oh yet we trust that somehow good . . . . .	243
Old Fitz, who from your suburb grange . . . . .	499
Old poets foster'd under friendlier skies . . . . .	537
Old warder of these buried bones . . . . .	239
Old Yew, which graspest at the stones . . . . .	230
On a midnight in midwinter when all but the winds are dead . . . . .	827
On either side the river lie . . . . .	26
On that last night before we went . . . . .	257
Once in a golden hour . . . . .	219
Once more the gate behind me falls . . . . .	83
Once more the Heavenly Power . . . . .	532
One was the Tishbite whom the raven fed . . . . .	845
One writes, that 'Other friends remain' . . . . .	231
Our birches yellowing and from each . . . . .	528
Our doctor had called in another, I never had seen him before . . . . .	480
'Ouse-keeper sent tha my lass, fur New Squire coom'd last night . . . . .	477
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep . . . . .	494
Peace; come away: the song of woe . . . . .	243
Bellam the King, who held and lost with Lot . . . . .	344
Queen Guinevere had fled the court, and sat . . . . .	423
Ralph would fight in Edith's sight . . . . .	829
Red of the dawn . . . . .	827
Revered, beloved—O you that hold . . . . .	1
Ring out wild bells, to the wild sky . . . . .	258
Rise, Britons, rise, if manhood be not dead . . . . .	850
Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again . . . . .	246, 256
Rivulet crossing my ground . . . . .	279
Roman Virgil, thou that singest . . . . .	530
Rose, on this terrace fifty years ago . . . . .	812
Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row! . . . . .	533
Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun . . . . .	262
Sainted Juliet! dearest name! . . . . .	836
Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn . . . . .	274
See what a lovely shell . . . . .	281

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Shall the hag Evil die with child of Good . . . . .	841
She came to the village church . . . . .	272
Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread? . . . . .	273
Sir, do you see this dagger? nay, why do you start aside? . . . . .	822
Sir Walter Vivian all a summer's day . . . . .	154
Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance . . . . .	246
Slow sail'd the weary mariners and saw . . . . .	14
So all day long the noise of battle roll'd . . . . .	64
'So careful of the type?' But no . . . . .	243
So closed our tale, of which I give you all . . . . .	200
So dark a mind within me dwells . . . . .	275
So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd applause . . . . .	226
So, Lady Flora, take my lay . . . . .	100, 101
So many worlds, so much to do . . . . .	247
So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away . . . . .	498
'Spring-flowers'! While you still delay to take . . . . .	803
Still on the tower stood the vane . . . . .	112
Still onward winds the dreary way . . . . .	236
Strange, that I felt so gay . . . . .	279
Strong Son of God immortal Love . . . . .	230
Summer is coming, summer is coming . . . . .	812
Sun comes, moon comes . . . . .	229
Sunset and evening star . . . . .	831
Sure never yet was Antelope . . . . .	849
Sweet after showers, ambrosial air . . . . .	251
Sweet and low, sweet and low . . . . .	167
Sweet Emma Moreland of yonder town . . . . .	103
Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt . . . . .	245
Take wings of fancy, and ascend . . . . .	247
Tears of the widower, when he sees . . . . .	233
That each who seems a separate whole . . . . .	241
That story which the bold Sir Bedevere . . . . .	434
That which we dare invoke to bless . . . . .	262
The baby new to earth and sky . . . . .	241
The brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court . . . . .	318
The bridal garland falls upon the bier . . . . .	830
'The Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd' . . . . .	75
The charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade! . . . . .	528
The churl in spirit, up or down . . . . .	259
The Danube to the Severn gave . . . . .	235
'The fault was mine, the fault was mine' . . . . .	280
The form, the form alone is eloquent . . . . .	25
The frost is here . . . . .	228
The gleam of household sunshine ends . . . . .	829
The golden apple, the golden apple, the hallowed fruit . . . . .	846
The groundflame of the crocus breaks the mould . . . . .	804
The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent . . . . .	295
The lesser griefs that may be said . . . . .	235
The lights and shadows fly . . . . .	227
The lintwhite and the thrustlecock . . . . .	837
The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man . . . . .	811
The love that rose on stronger wings . . . . .	263
The mist and the rain, the mist and the rain! . . . . .	228



# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

The Northwind fall'n, in the newstarred night	846
The pallid thunderstricken sigh for gain	841
The path by which we twain did go	236
The plain was grassy, wild and bare	15
The poet in a golden clime was born	13
The rain had fallen, the Poet arose	116
The son of him with whom we strove for power	208
The son, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains	222
The splendour falls on castle walls	172
The time draws near the birth of Christ	237, 257
The varied earth, the moving heaven	839
The varying year with blade and sheaf	98
The voice and the Peak	223
The wind, that beats the mountain, blows	59
The winds as at their hour of birth	5
The wish, that of the living whole	243
The woods decay, the woods decay and fall	90
There are three things which fill my heart with sighs	845
There is a sound of thunder afar	828
There is no land like England	843
There is sweet music here that softer falls	51
There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier	38
There on the top of the down	814
There rolls the deep where grew the tree	262
These lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer!	226
These to His Memory—since he held them dear	287
They left the doors ajar; and by their clash	473
They rose to where their sovran eagle sails	495
This lump of earth has left his estate	275
This morning is the morning of the day	68
This thing, that thing is the rage	829
This truth came borne with bier and pall	250
Tho' if an eye that's downward cast	244
Tho' sin too oft, when smitten by Thy rod	829
Tho' truths in manhood darkly join	239
Those that of late had fled to far and fast	495
Thou art not steep'd in golden languors	8
Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze	234
Thou, from the first unborn, undying love	841
Thou third great Canning, stand among our best	533
Thou who stealest fire	10
Though Night hath climbed her peak of highest noon	841
Thy converse drew us with delight	259
Thy dark eyes open'd not	21
'Thy prayer was 'Light—more Light—while Time shall last!'	534
Thy spirit ere our fatal loss	240
Thy tuwhits are lull'd, I wot	9
Thy voice is on the rolling air	264
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise	260
'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand	234
To sleep I give my powers away	231
To-night the winds begin to rise	234
To-night ungather'd let us leave	258
Two bees within a chrystal flowerbell rockèd	843

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Two children in two neighbour villages . . . . .	17
Two little hands that meet . . . . .	229
Two Suns of Love make day of human life . . . . .	535
Ulysses, much-experienced man . . . . .	802
Unwatch'd the garden bough shall sway . . . . .	236
Uplift a thousand voices full and sweet . . . . .	207
Urania speaks with darker'd brow . . . . .	239
Vex not thou the poet's mind . . . . .	13
Victor in Drama, Victor in Romance . . . . .	496
Vine, vine and eglantine . . . . .	227
Voice of the summerwind . . . . .	839
Waait till our Sally cooms in, fur thou mun a' sights to tell . . . . .	467
Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea . . . . .	465
'Wait a little,' you say, 'you are sure it 'll all come right' . . . . .	463
Wan sculptor, weepst thou to take the cast . . . . .	25
Warrior of God, man's friend, and tyrant's foe . . . . .	534
Warrior of God, whose strong right arm debased . . . . .	24
We know him, out of SHAKSPEARE'S art . . . . .	849
We leave the well-beloved place . . . . .	236
We left behind the painted buoy . . . . .	109
We ranging down this lower track . . . . .	241
We move, the wheel must always move . . . . .	812
We used to fight the French . . . . .	851
We were two daughters of one race . . . . .	41
Welcome, welcome with one voice . . . . .	536
Well, you shall have that song that Leonard wrote . . . . .	88
What am I doing, you say to me, 'wasting the sweet summer hours?' . . . . .	824
What be those crown'd forms high over the sacred fountain? . . . . .	810
What hope is here for modern rhyme . . . . .	248
What sight so lured him thro' the fields he knew . . . . .	811
What time I wasted youthful hours . . . . .	850
What time the mighty moon was gathering light . . . . .	16
What words are these have fall'n from me? . . . . .	234
Whatever I have said or sung . . . . .	263
Wheer 'asta beän saw long . . . . .	212
When cats run home and light is come . . . . .	8
When from the terrors of nature . . . . .	826
When I contemplate all alone . . . . .	249
When in the down I sink my head . . . . .	246
When Lazarus left his charnel-cave . . . . .	238
When on my bed the moonlight falls . . . . .	245
When rosy plumelets tuft the larch . . . . .	253
When the breeze of the joyful dawn blew free . . . . .	9
When will the stream be weary of flowing . . . . .	2
Where Claribel low-lieth . . . . .	2
Where is another sweet as my sweet . . . . .	228
Where is one that, born of woman, altogether can escape . . . . .	827
Where is the Giant of the Sun, which stood . . . . .	844
While about the shore of Mona . . . . .	224
While man and woman still are incomplete . . . . .	812
Whither, O whither, love, shall we go . . . . .	220

## INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Who can say . . . . .	848
Who fears to die? Who fears to die? . . . . .	842
Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail . . . . .	260
Who would be A mermaid fair . . . . .	18
Who would be A merman bold . . . . .	18
Why wait you pretty plover? and what is it that you fear? . . . . .	799
Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet . . . . .	252
Will my tiny spark of being wholly vanish in your deeps and heights? . . . . .	830
Winds are loud and you are dumb . . . . .	229
Witch-elms that counterchange the floor . . . . .	252
With a half-glance upon the sky . . . . .	12
With blackest moss the flower-plots . . . . .	7
With farmer Allen at the farm abode . . . . .	72
With one black shadow at his feet . . . . .	28
With roses muskybreathed . . . . .	844
With such compelling cause to grieve . . . . .	237
With trembling fingers did we weave . . . . .	237
With weary steps I loiter on . . . . .	239
 Year after year unto her feet . . . . .	 98
Yet if some voice that man could trust . . . . .	238
Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven . . . . .	245
You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease . . . . .	60
You cast to the ground the hope which once was mine . . . . .	840
You did late review my lays . . . . .	849
You leave us: you will see the Rhine . . . . .	255
You make our faults too gross, and thence maintain . . . . .	812
You might have won the Poet's name . . . . .	115
You must wake and call me early . . . . .	47
You say, but with no touch of scorn . . . . .	254
You shake your head. A random string . . . . .	100
You thought my heart too far diseased . . . . .	245
You, you, if you shall fail to understand . . . . .	535
Your ringlets, your ringlets . . . . .	853

